UNCENSORED RECOLLECTIONS

204

With Best Wishes

Not

By The Author

UNCENSORED RECOLLECTIONS

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. . . *quisquis narrat talia, plura tacet*—

MARTIAL

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
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Uncensored Recollections

CHAPTER I

King Edward (when Prince of Wales) and myself in my nursery. The great Count Frederic Lagrange and a memorable drive. The "lions' den" in the Paris Opera House. The late Duc de Gramont and La Dame aux Camélias. Doche. Louis Napoleon and Lord Pembroke. A quarter of a million for "rather nice shoulders." Travers and some of his jokes. Morning reception at the Tuileries. Emperor not ungrateful. Some caustic remarks. Queen Hortense. Delightful elopements. José Hidalgo and Mme. de Montijo. Pleasant pastimes. After the Imperial marriage. "Enfin; la voilà casée." The real father of the Empress Eugénie.

ODDLY enough, one of my very first recollections of anything is connected with the late King Edward, and in rather a comic way. It was in Paris, and when we were living in the Place Vendôme, directly opposite what is now the Hotel Ritz. He (himself then a mere youth) came suddenly into the nursery, and as he entered I slid down from the chair on which I had been sprawling and stood before him. I remember the incident perfectly well, because my nurse, Coralie, was half undressed at the time, and, of course, greatly abashed and confused by the sudden and unexpected arrival of the young Prince, who, as a matter of

fact, was as much astonished and dismayed as was she, for, with a smile and a nod to me, he beat a hasty retreat. Why he should have entered the room at all is one of the great historical secrets that will, I fear, never be revealed—probably to see if my father was there; but that very morning he told the Duchesse d'Albe (sister of the Empress) that I was so well brought up—had such good manners! The guileless young Prince thought I stood up out of respect (his Royal Mama had instilled into him quite mediæval ideas of the sacrosanct qualities of Royal Blood—ideas of which he never quite dispossessed himself, although the wear and tear of time and experience, and the companionship of men like Charlie Beresford and others, greatly modified their vigour). As a matter of fact, I stood up merely because my baby legs were tired of sitting down. I had never been taught to treat him with any particular respect, and he did not inspire me with any, for he was a mere youth and absolutely unassuming. Indeed, he was always very nice to me, and not a bit solemn or condescending, as were some of our visitors, notably "Plon Plon," of whom I was always frightened when I was a baby. But the Duchesse told my mother what the Prince had said about me, and they were both greatly amused, for I am afraid reverence and respect were never among my good qualities, especially when a child. This was the first (although, I dare say, not the last) time that I have in the course of my life been credited with merit undeserved.

Another of my earliest recollections is of a drive with the owner of, among other great racers, that splendid horse Gladiateur—Comte Frederic de Lagrange—in those far-off days a very great dandy and leader of fashion in Paris. He and my cousin Edgar Ney, Oscar de Lafayette, the Duc de Vallombrosa (a man of no family at all, but with plenty of money, great personal beauty, and unlimited audacity), Count Nieuwerkerke (afterwards the successor of the famous Count Alfred d'Orsay at the Beaux Arts, and the *cher ami* of the Emperor's cousin, the beautiful and clever Princess Mathilde) also a very handsome man and possessed of great personal charm of manner, the Emperor's famous bastard brother, Comte (later Duc) de Morny, the Marquis de Talhoüet, and a dozen or so more, were what were then called the "Lions"; and the box at the Opera (of course, I am speaking of the old house in the Rue le Peletier) that they occupied was known as "La fosse aux Lions," or Lions' den. They were the leaders of fashion in those days, and all that they wore, or did, or said, was the talk of the town. Frederic de Lagrange ran through three fortunes—his own and that of two heiresses he married (one was a Chimay). His extravagance was as much the talk of Paris as the flirtations of his very beautiful sister, the Duchesse d'Istrie—his only other sister was very ugly and therefore, very properly, "très dévote"! Among many other things I remember

hearing was that he had decided to have sliding doors made on the side of his racing stables opening on to an artist's studio, so that his horses might be painted at their ease, so to speak. Well, this very magnificent dandy took a great fancy to me (I was about four, or nearly four) and used to bring me all kinds of bon-bons and toys; and one day he obtained my mother's permission to take me for a drive out to the Bois in his "Tilbury." I shall never forget that drive nor the dress of the kind-hearted dandy who drove me. He wore a white transparent shirt through which an undershirt of crimson silk was visible, and as his face was always very red and his hair was very black, he looked rather ferocious. And what a drive it was! He dashed up the Champs Elysées at breakneck speed, the people (everyone knew him by sight) making way for him, and no accident happened till our return, when, going full speed, he knocked a man down at the Rond Point. And here came in a very "Balzacky" episode. Lagrange merely stopped to see if the man were at all seriously injured, and when he found that the fellow was only slightly bruised, he took out of his pocket a long green silk net purse (the kind of thing ladies sometimes carry) full of gold and banknotes, threw it into the man's face and dashed on, the police respectfully making way for him, or I should say for us, for I was hanging on to my reckless dandy friend, and crowing with delight. I have, I confess, always had a great admi-

ration (of course, very silly and no doubt very wrong) for men reckless with money, and have known more than a few in my time. But I have never, I think, since witnessed anything quite so spectacular and Balzacky (I must put the k on) as this Lagrange incident; at least it seemed very wonderful to my childish eyes, possibly because I was at first afraid we had killed the man; then enraptured at the sudden transformation from sorrow to delight brought about by the swollen silk purse, not contemptuously but kindly, though carelessly, thrown by "le beau Frederic" right into the face of the victim of his mad recklessness.

The late Duc de Gramont was another of the Lions of those far-off days who used to come to our house a great deal. Of course, the de Gramonts are, like our Dukes of Richmond, Grafton, and St. Albans, of the Royal Blood—*de la main gauche,* being descended from *la belle* Corisande, the mistress of Henry IV. What, however, is but little known is that the particular Duke of whom I am writing, the father of the present Duke, was, when Prince de Bidache, the prototype from which Dumas fils took his Armand Duval, the horrible little cad who treats Marguerite Gautier so badly in La Dame aux Camélias. Of course, the original of Marguerite Gautier was Marie Duplessis, a famous *demi mondaine,* who was madly in love with "le beau Agénor," as the young Prince de Bidache was then called. All this was long before my time, but I had it from Dumas fils himself, and, in fact,

it is no secret. Of course, the disinterested affection and throwing of money about is all the invention of Dumas fils, but it is true that the father of the young Prince had to intervene to sever the entanglement, and that Marie eventually died of consumption, but not as the result of the rupture with "le beau Agénor." Oddly enough, she was in the *monde galant* madly jealous of the lady who was destined later to create on the stage the very part of La Dame aux Camélias at the old Vaudeville Theatre in the Place de la Bourse, of which she, Marie Duplessis, was, as I have said, the original—namely, Doche. Marie Duplessis lived in an entresol on the Boulevard de la Madeleine in the same building that shelters the most exclusive club in Paris, the Cercle de l'Union. She was renowned among other things for never being able to speak the truth, and when Stanislas de la Rochefoucauld asked her the cause of the failing, she replied, "I like telling lies because they keep the teeth white."

Speaking of Doche (she was really a great actress in the part of La Dame aux Camélias and vastly superior in the same rôle to Sarah Bernhardt), I may mention a few facts but little known, and never in print before, but which I had direct from Maria, Lady Ailesbury, who knew all the persons concerned. Doche was for the time being under the protection of the spendthrift Sir Robert Clifton who, oddly enough, was always hopelessly wrong in his aspirates, like Walter Savage Landor, and used to speak of his "'eart" and call things

"houtrageous." Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, fell madly in love with her, and sent young Hancock, who became later the well-known Bond Street jeweller, to her with an offer to take her under his protection, adding: "I can't marry you, for my name belongs to my dynasty and not to myself, but I will make a binding and legal contract to protect you always, and should I ever become Emperor to provide handsomely for you." Now it so happened that at that very time Doche had a somewhat similar offer from the very reckless and extravagant Lord Pembroke of those days. She therefore refused the offer of the future Emperor of the French. But she lost Lord Pembroke too, for that noble *viveur* gave her to understand that his very splendid offer to her was dependent on her coming to dine with him on a certain day at the "Star and Garter" at Richmond. Doche thought it clever not to go to Richmond, fondly believing that she could twist the Lord of beautiful Wilton round her finger. But she was grievously mistaken. Lord Pembroke would never even speak to her again; but a few days later he sent the manager of Storr and Mortimer, the jewellers, to a ballet girl named Schaeffer, with instructions to submit for her acceptance jewels up to £8,000. When he came with his case full of precious stones, the man found her living in a fourth floor room, in a street off Leicester Square, engaged in washing her stockings, and she showed more astuteness than Doche, for she accepted the

jewels and proffered protection, with the result that Lord Pembroke is reported to have spent nearly a quarter of a million on her. She bore him a son who was sent over to France to be brought up, and live, and who assumed (without, of course, any possible legal right to do so) his father's second title of Montgomery—hence the present Comtes de Montgomerie, the Protestant, not the Catholic family of that name, who have been well-known for years on the French turf. Old Mr. Corbin, a well-known American gentleman living in Paris, who was always speaking of "my friend Howden," meaning the famous Dandy, Lord Howden, the friend of Beau Brummell, once asked Lord Pembroke: "What in the world can you possibly see in that Schaeffer girl to lavish the money on her that you do; do you think her beautiful?" "Certainly not," replied Pembroke. "Clever?" "No, she's a fool." "Voluptuous?" "Good Heavens, no." "Well made?" "No; flat as a pancake, and hands and feet like a stable boy." "What then?" "Well," said Lord Pembroke, after reflection, "I think it must be because she has got rather nice shoulders." Nearly a quarter of a million for rather nice shoulders is what would be called, in the slang of to-day, rather a tall order.

Doche thus lost both Prince Louis Napoleon and Lord Pembroke, but she tried to retrieve her bad luck many years later in Paris when her former admirer was on the throne by taking advantage of the infatuation of a young French nobleman, whose

name I will not mention. Doche was at that time living in an apartment on the sixth floor in the Rue de Rivoli not far from the theatre where she was playing in La Dame aux Camélias; and she told the young Marquis that on a certain evening she would listen to his love song if he would come upstairs on his hands and knees like a dog to her apartment carrying in his mouth a basket containing a certain diamond necklace that she had chosen at Dumorets in the Rue de la Paix. This unfortunate Romeo obeyed his Juliet and came up on his hands and knees as ordered, with the basket and contents desired; but some hours later he died in her apartments: and Doche (this is a fact and not fiction, as any old Parisian who remembers the early days of the Second Empire will tell you) calmly wrote (of course, it was done for stage effect) to the poor man's wife: "Madame, I regret to say that your husband has just died in my rooms; I wish you would take all necessary steps at once. *Car, son cadavre chez moi est très embarrassant.*"

The apartment, by the way, in which this tragedy took place was a long while afterwards occupied for years by old Mrs. Ward, the mother of the late Genevieve Ward, the actress. Mrs. Ward used to hold Bohemian receptions there that were rather amusing, and at which I met Mark Twain, and also old Travers, the well-known New York wit, whose sarcastic remarks were made all the more comic by his stammering delivery of them. Many are the funny stories put to his account. Here is one of

them, which Whistler swore to me that he knew for a fact to be true. When the infamous Erie ring was in full power, and Gould and Fiske were making millions, Fiske one day asked Travers to come and see his new yacht. Travers consented out of curiosity, but I think Fiske must have regretted the visit, for when he was showing his many guests his portrait by Bouguereau on one side of the saloon, and that of Gould by an American artist on the other, Travers stammered out: "But, my dear Mr. Fiske, that's not complete, you on one side and Mr. Gould on the other." "What do you mean?" asked Fiske, "I don't understand how it isn't complete." "Why certainly not," stammered Travers, "you ought to have the Saviour in the middle." On another occasion he met Henry Ward Beecher in Fifth Avenue, one afternoon just after having lost some money at the Union Club, with the result that he was in bad temper; and when Beecher stopped him, Travers swore at him. Beecher lifted up his hands in holy horror and amazement, and exclaimed, "What language; oh, what language!" This brought back Travers's good humour at once, and he burst out laughing; slapped Beecher on the back, and stammered: "I say, Henry, it's all right, my boy; you preach a great deal, and I swear a great deal, but neither of us means anything by it." By the way, a great number of American witticisms have been put down to Travers that are not his at all. The real author of that famous saying, "Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris,"

was fat, sleepy, old Tom Appleton, who was called the Sidney Smith of America. He was the brother-in-law of Longfellow, and very fond of knowing celebrities. I remember his telling my mother once in Paris how he had just come over from England after a fruitless attempt to see Jean Ingelow because a servant girl said to him: "Please, Sir, Miss Ingelow can't see you; she's got boils." "Imagine a poetess with boils!" exclaimed old Tom.

As my father had seen a great deal of Prince Louis Napoleon in London, and was also a friend of Lord Clarendon, both my father and mother were made much of at the Tuileries during the Second Empire, and all the more because the Ney family (Prince de la Moskowa, Duc d'Elchingen, etc.) are cousins of ours. When the Emperor married he gave a morning reception at the Tuileries to present personal friends to his consort. There was no coming in and going out as at our Court. There the guests assembled in a room and the Emperor and Empress walked in to you (he alone was announced "Sa Majesté l'Empereur"—the Empress, never), chatted with you and then passed out. On the morning in question, while the guests were assembled and waiting, and the Chamberlains lounging about—by the way, they had a ridiculous and affected manner of dragging their legs as if dead tired, a gait by which you could always recognize a Court Chamberlain anywhere, even on a race-course—suddenly one of these officials saw a lace wrapper lying on the floor—it was a morning recep-

tion and rather informal in character and the ladies wore their bonnets and mantles. This special article of clothing belonged to a very old Hungarian lady, one of the Apponyis, and had been dropped by accident and was very dirty and rather ragged. The Chamberlain walked round it cautiously, looking at it fixedly and with horror and curiosity, as though it were a bomb; and then as some of the ladies began to titter, the folding doors were thrown open and "Sa Majesté l'Empereur" was sonorously announced, and the Emperor and his divinely beautiful consort appeared in the doorway. The Chamberlain had only just time to pick up the lace wrapper with his sword and throw it behind a sofa.

When the Emperor and Empress came to my mother (my father was in England at the time) and the Emperor presented her as the wife of a very dear personal friend, the Empress, smiling sweetly, began to speak to my mother in English, when the Emperor interrupted her and said, laughingly: "Oh, you can speak to her in French, my dear. Mme.——speaks French a great deal better than you do!"—which was true, for the Empress always had a strong Spanish accent, whereas my mother's accent was perfect, she having been brought up in Paris. I shall have occasion to say a great deal more about the Empress presently—one of the most beautiful and fascinating women of her day; and one of the most clever; or, as old Lord Dudley put it: "The beauty of a

Helen of Troy and the brains of a Catherine of Russia."

I may say, as one who has heard directly from unbiased persons who had intimate personal knowledge of what they were talking about, that it is absolutely untrue that Napoleon III was ungrateful to anyone—either in England or elsewhere—who had ever been kind to him. To Miss Howard he repaid a hundred-fold all the money she had advanced him; and he made her Comtesse de Beauregard. Her son, de Bêchevet, whom I knew very well, was, of course, not the Emperor's son, and Bêchevet was aware of that himself. He was Miss Howard's son by a former lover, a livery-stable keeper at Cambridge, and was born long before Prince Louis Napoleon ever made his mother's acquaintance. Yet because of his mother, the Emperor was always very kind to him. So with d'Orsay and Lady Blessington. Mindful of the old days of Gore House, His Majesty made d'Orsay *Intendant des Beaux Arts.* For Lady Blessington, personally he could not very well do much openly, as she had defied all decent society and thrown her bonnet high over the mill, as it were, and the Emperor had to be careful, for the young and prudish Queen Victoria was looking critically and carefully at all that was taking place at the new Court in Paris. He secretly sent the wayward Irish Countess money, and let her understand that she could always count on him as a banker, but when it came to receiving her at Court, that was a

different matter. She did come, however, and when His Majesty gravely and significantly asked her if she expected to stay long in Paris, or, in other words, if she intended still publishing to the world her relations with Count d'Orsay, the Countess replied with true Irish wit: "Non, Sire; et vous?"

This, by the way, in its extreme causticity, is not unlike a remark made at about the same time by the Emperor himself to his uncle Jerome, the ex-King of Westphalia, and father of "Plon Plon" and the Princess Mathilde. Everyone directly or indirectly connected in any way with the extraordinary romance of the first Napoleon had flocked to Paris seeking what favours of every kind they could get from poor Louis Napoleon. Among this clamouring throng were, of course, those connected by blood with the great Little Corporal, and foremost in this vanguard of claimants was Jerome, who (and I have this from the old Duchesse Pozzo di Borgo) was insatiable in his demands for both himself and his children. The Emperor was a very amiable and long-suffering man, and stood the insolence and browbeating of his uncle with admirable equanimity, until one day, when old Jerome, annoyed by the reluctance of the Emperor to grant him some particularly outrageous request, exclaimed with angry insolence: "After all, I need not be astonished, Louis, for, as you know very well, you've nothing of a Bonaparte about you really"; to which Louis Napoleon demurely replied: "Oh, yes; I have—*the family.*"

Of course, old Jerome was right, and Louis Napoleon had not a drop of Bonaparte blood in his veins; both he and Morny were the sons of the amorous Queen Hortense, who was notoriously unfaithful to her husband, but the King of Holland was not their father. There was never really any secret about the matter at all; Morny openly boasted of it, in fact sported "Armes parlantes" —*hortensias*—on his escutcheon; and even during the Second Empire, the guide who showed visitors through the Royal Picture Gallery at The Hague would point to the portrait of a gallant Dutch Admiral, and blandly explain: "And this, ladies and gentlemen, is a portrait of the father of the present French Emperor, Napoleon III."

That the Emperor Napoleon III was not the son of King Louis of Holland is, as I say, well known; but it is a less widely recognized fact that his consort, the late Empress Eugénie, was not the daughter of her mother's husband; and that the Lord Clarendon of those days was really her father. Her mother, the Comtesse de Montijo (*née* Kirkpatrick of Closeburn), possessed lovers galore, and had a most delightful habit of kidnapping any male biped whose society she wished to enjoy. It would appear to be the best way; it seems the most practical, and saves a most lamentable waste of time. A very dear and intimate old friend of ours, a man to whom I was personally greatly attached, the late José Hidalgo, was thus captured. One day, when a mere stripling, he was

sauntering in the Prado; a carriage suddenly stopped; a man alighted and approached Hidalgo, and bowing and smiling asked the youth to accompany him. My friend had had more than a mere inkling of his impending doom, and was prepared for the worst (or should I say, the best); so when what De Soveral always called the sword of "Damokuls" fell, he faced the music like a hero, and was spirited off to La Granja, where he stayed many weeks under the tyrannical governance of Mme. de Montijo and a few other equally fascinating and pitiless lady pirates and a handful of young men, who like himself, after the fashion of Ganymede, had been stolen from their families. One of their pastimes, as recounted by Hidalgo, was for the men to get down on all fours on the floor, and for the ladies to straddle across their backs and tilt at each other as mounted knights might do at a tournament. It must have been a most pleasing game, beating even "Rugger" from the point of view of exercise. I have often thought since, that in this romping of more than eighty years ago, here may be found the beginning of that great liking for polo that distinguishes the grandsons of those very athletes who pranced about on their hands and knees gleefully bearing the delicious weights of pretty women astride their backs—who knows!

But although the lover of the mother, José Hidalgo remained always the devoted friend of the two daughters, the Duchesse d'Albe and the Comtesse de Teba, better known as the Empress

Eugénie. When the tragic farce of the Mexican Empire started, the Empress had Hidalgo appointed as the first (and only) Ambassador from Maximilian to France (how well I remember the short-lived Embassy in the Rue de Penthièvre!) and later, when the Duchesse d'Albe died, the Empress sent for Hidalgo to help her in clearing up some matters connected with her dead sister. I have often had in my hands a case or book, sent by Her Majesty to my friend, that, when opened, contained on one side a photograph of the Duchesse on her deathbed, and on the other a lock of the dead woman's hair and a few words in the Empress's handwriting, in which she called Hidalgo, "l'ami des mauvais jours,"—a favourite expression of Her Majesty, and one she applied very many years later to me in a letter written at her dictation from Chislehurst, shortly after the death of the Emperor, thanking me for a trivial service it had been my delight and privilege to render in bringing something over from Paris for which Her Majesty and her entourage had been anxiously waiting.

By the way, here is a curious fact. When the Emperor married the Comtesse de Teba he did not want to have her mother at the ceremony at Notre Dame. José Hidalgo was there; and on the afternoon of that day, as he was passing through the Rue de la Paix, he heard his name called, and looking up he saw beckoning to him from a window in the Hotel Westminster, Mme. de Montijo—the lady who had kidnapped him so many years before

in Spain! Up he went; it was no amorous adventure now; the Countess only wanted to know how he thought it had all gone off at the Cathedral; and then when Hidalgo had given her his impressions, the devoted mother clasped her hands and exclaimed: "Enfin—Grâce à Dieu, la voilà casée." The beautiful daughter who had hung on her hands so long—for the Duchesse d'Albe was married long before Eugénie—and for whom she had schemed and dreamed dreams, having had her at one time sent to be brought up by some maiden Scottish aunts, the Misses Kirkpatrick at Clifton, where Lord Clarendon used to come and visit the child, and where, known as Miss Munteajer, she used to run about with her golden-reddish hair falling down her back, playing with a boy named Williams, whom I knew well later on in life—little dreaming that her future husband, Louis Napoleon, often stayed not far away at that very time with his friend Walter Savage Landor—this daughter was indeed "casée" at last, and was Empress of the French! In her delight and satisfaction at the fulfilment of her most golden of dreams, I almost wonder the Comtesse did not make Hidalgo get on his hands and knees again, and straddle over him once more, just for auld lang syne, so to speak, and have just one last canter of triumph. Perhaps she did—I never thought to ask Hidalgo.

But to return to the Clarendon episode. The facts are: Lord Clarendon was well known to be a lover of Mme. de Montijo; whereas her sister, the

Duchesse d'Albe, was very dark—almost swarthy —Eugénie was very fair and had that beautiful shade of hair peculiar to the Clarendon Villiers, a golden red (the Empress used to use leaden combs to subdue the colour); Lord Clarendon always took the greatest interest in the young lady, so much so, indeed, that it was at his own personal request that an English lady, a Mrs. Gould, allowed the Prince President, Louis Napoleon, to meet the Comtesse de Teba in her apartments in the Champs Elysées, to avoid publicity, during the courtship (Mrs. Gould was not forgotten by the grateful Imperial couple, nor by the nobleman at Watford; the Emperor and Empress were sponsors to her youngest boy, Louis Eugene, and he was given, when he left Oxford, a Clerkship in our Foreign Office): during the first years of her married life the Empress often came over, almost secretly, to England (people at the Tuileries used to say: "Her Majesty has gone over to Scotland to see her relations and have a rest for a few days") and stayed in a house, *incognito,* near Watford, owned by a man named Coleman, and was visited there daily by Lord Clarendon. Coleman, who told me this himself when an old man, knew perfectly well that the lady was the Empress of France, although she went by the name of Mme. de Guzman, and, of course, Lord Clarendon being a neighbour, Coleman knew him personally, and indeed, Lord Clarendon came openly to see the Spanish lady in his own name.

CHAPTER II

Thackeray and Lord Farintosh. G. P. R. James. Some of his jokes. Colonel Thorn and his family. Clothilde Barili. Charles Lever and the sherry. The State Ball for Queen Victoria at Versailles. Incident at the last Ball given by the Duke and Duchess at Northumberland House, Charing Cross. Mrs. Charles Astor Bristed and the guardsman. The ordeal by hairpins. Princess Menshikoff's house. Death of Mrs. Bristed. The ball in New York for the Prince of Wales. Martha Haines Butt. Old Havemeyer. The Prince's gloves. Incidents. "Tense" atmosphere. Incidents. Duke of Newcastle, Lord St. Germans and others. The sanguinary episode and Lord Sandwich. The incredulous reporter.

I HAVE referred to the late Duc de Gramont as having been the original of Armand Duval in La Dame aux Camélias. Here is another instance of a character in fiction taken from life. My father was walking with Thackeray one day in the Champs Elysées when they met Lord Bath. He stopped my father for a few minutes to ask about my mother and myself and mutual friends, and then passed on, not knowing Thackeray. When he had gone, Thackeray said to my father: "Do you know who that was?" My father, rather astonished, replied: "Whom do you mean —Lord Bath?" "No," said Thackeray, with a grin. "That was Lord Farintosh!" Thackeray had many enemies, and among them was another

old friend of ours—that very prolific writer of fiction, G. P. R. James. Why James hated him I never knew. Very likely jealousy—but there was no love lost between them. James had a way of chattering in doggerel to me when I was a child, and I remember once he was walking out with me and my nurse up the Rue de la Paix, when he suddenly exclaimed: "Here comes Mr. Thackeray, that rhymes with quackery" and bolted. James was a handsome little man, full of fun, and always jesting at everything. He married a Miss Thomas, and used to say with mock sadness: "We haven't a whole name between us!" His name was George Payne Rainsford James, but he was called George Prince Regent James because he was so extravagant. He had been brought up by the Duchess of Kent with the Princess Victoria, and the Queen was very fond of him, was a true friend to him in every way, and was constantly writing to him. I used, as a child, to see lots of her letters to him, beginning: "My dear George," and ending: "Affectionately yours, Victoria R." In fact, the sale of those Royal autographs was an important financial help to his family, when he finally drank himself to death in Venice, where the Queen had had him made Consul (he got into the habit of drinking in America when Consul, in Norfolk, Virginia). He never wrote himself, but would walk about the room dictating to an amanuensis and taking snuff that he carried loose in his coat pocket, as he said he could never keep a snuff-box.

At one time he had as amanuensis a most ridiculous-looking, wild American youth. He had brought him from the States (he was recommended by Hawthorne) because he was a quick writer, but he was such an odd-looking lad that people in the streets used to stare at him in Paris. His name was Ovid Plumb, but James gravely introduced him to my mother as "My young American friend and secretary, Mr. Cicero Peach." James's great friend was the second Duke of Wellington, or "Douro" as he always called him, and the Duke, a quiet, unobtrusive little man, not at all like his pig-headed father or somewhat flighty mother, adopted Charley James, one of the novelist's sons. The eldest, Courtney James, named, I believe, after Lord Devon, settled in America as an engineer; and his only daughter, Florence, went on the stage in Australia. Although James made a great deal of money with his "Solitary Horseman" stories he squandered it all. Whatever became of "Douro's" protégé, Charley, I know not.

James brought Charles Lever to our house in Paris, but I do not think Lever cared for very little children, for he never paid any attention to me, and I only mention his name to chronicle a story about him that dates from this time, and which my father used to tell. Lever was Consul at Trieste, or "Try East," as he facetiously called it in the silly punning fashion then in vogue. They were dining at the house in the Faubourg St. Germain of one of the best-known and oldest

American residents in Paris, Colonel Thorn. One of his daughters married the Baron de Pierres, and another the Comte de Varennes, both Chamberlains of the Empress—Mme. de Pierres, a coarse and vulgar woman, and Mme. de Varennes a very charming lady who gave me a Shetland pony. His son married Clothilde Barili, half-sister to Carlotta and Adelina Patti (old Salvatore Patti married the widow Barili, who had two sons, Ettore and Antonio, and a daughter Clothilde, by her first husband, but only two children, Carlotta and Adelina, by her second) and the marriage, a shocking mésalliance contracted against the Colonel's wish, was a tragic failure. Young Thorn was absolutely infatuated with his Italian wife, but she, when she had spent all his money and found that his parents would give him no more, treated him like a dog—literally like a dog, or much worse—for my father, going one day to see them with Robert Bulwer Lytton (Owen Meredith, the most delightful of men), found Clothilde, lying back in an armchair, half dressed and smoking a cigarette, and very dirty, with her unfortunate husband sitting on the ground at her feet, and as she rose to greet her guests she turned, cleared her throat and deliberately *spat* straight into the upturned adoring face of her spouse. How often have I heard my father and the late Lord Lytton tell that beastly tale!

Well, Colonel Thorn gave a dinner, at which my father and mother and Charles Lever among many others were present; and when the ladies had left

the room old Thorn produced some sherry, which he pompously asserted had been sent to him by his very dear friend the Marquis de Peñafiel as being something of unique excellence, adding: "I don't drink sherry myself, so I should like to have your opinion of it, Mr. Lever." The author of *Harry Lorrequer* looked at the rim of his glass very carefully (I forgot to say he was somewhat drunk at the time) and then turned to his host and said smilingly: "I have three ways of judging sherry, Colonel Thorn—by the colour; by the odour, and by the taste." He then lifted his glass up to the light, and beamed and said: "The colour is good —quite good." He raised it to his nose, smelt it, put it away, smelt it again, and then said, somewhat reluctantly: "The odour is—ahem—far from unpleasant." Then he raised it to his lips, but hardly had he tasted it than he put it down at once, and turning to his neighbour, my father, said: "Would you kindly pass me the port, please." Everyone burst out laughing, but the old Colonel was rather nettled, and said: "I am sorry you don't like it, Mr. Lever, but as I told you, I never touch sherry myself, so know nothing about it. But I confess I am surprised that my very dear old friend, the Marquis de Peñafiel, should have sent me an inferior quality. Pray tell me what fault you find with it, Mr. Lever." Lever shook his head: "No, Colonel, I'd rather not." "But do," pleaded the Colonel, "I beg of you; I shall certainly let my friend know what you say of his wine." "Well,"

said Lever, with a drunken smile. "If you must know, Colonel, that sherry tastes as if it had been *drunk before.*"

When the famous Ball was given at Versailles by the Emperor and Empress to Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, Prince Napoleon gave my mother six blank invitations to fill in as she pleased and give to friends. The same thing happened many years later when the ball was given in New York to the young Prince of Wales (Edward VII) and with the same result. Never, my dear reader, let such a thing befall you—you don't make friends—only enemies—and Mrs. Brown is not in the least obliged to you for giving her what she thinks she has a right to have, and which, in fact, she thinks it is scandalous did not reach her direct and in the ordinary way: while Lady Jones will be your deadly foe for life because you preferred Mrs. Brown to her. It is like the Ten Virgins all over again: those who had the oil went in all right, and were not only satisfied but possibly not unpleased to learn the others were outside: but the oil-less ladies who were on the wrong side of the door would doubtless have used strong language if one of their number had, just at the last minute, and as a special favour—" just for you, dear "—been, even without a drop of " Rockefeller " about her, called into the inner chamber. So refuse to accept invitations *en blanc* to distribute, or you will be sowing Cadmean teeth. I only know of one case of the kind where no scalps were left on the green, and

that is when the late Duchess of Northumberland was leaving her house in Charing Cross for ever, "prior"—as Winston Churchill would say—to its being demolished. She then gave dear old Augustus Lumley a lot of invitations *en blanc* to fill in and give to whom he pleased, saying, "You know a lot of young people who have a right to come and look at the old rooms for the last time and whom I have forgotten, or who have grown up recently." The great Augustus gave me one, and I went and looked at the old rooms for the last time (and first). Splendid rooms they were; but my most vivid recollection of that evening was the terrible conduct of a certain peer very dear to me, Lord W., who was almost a teetotaller, but who that night, owing to his having just discovered his wife's infidelity, came to Northumberland House very drunk and like a madman, and put his hands on the bare shoulders of the Duchess and pushed her into a corner! There was a terrible row about it, and Queen Victoria was said to have been frenzied with fury, and no wonder. Dear Lord W. was a most quiet man and the grandson of one of England's best-known celebrities. He has now joined, beyond the veil, his illustrious grandfather and the Duchess whom he insulted.

But to return to the Ball at Versailles. It was a most splendid affair—troops lined the road all the way from Paris, and the entire route was brilliantly illuminated, no mean achievement in those days before electric light had come in. The

Queen and Prince Albert were accompanied by the young Prince of Wales, a mere boy, and the Crown Princess (Empress Frederick). My mother told me that the Empress and Prince Albert, partners in the Royal quadrille, were a vision of beauty; but their august *vis-à-vis* (what is the proper plural or is there none?) were not very imposing—the short, somewhat red-faced Queen, and the short, badly made, half-lame Emperor (he always dragged one leg, which is doubtless why the Imperial Chamberlains dragged both of theirs, as I have said they did). Count Walewski fell flat on his face as he advanced to take the hand of the Queen in a quadrille—not drunk, but he slipped on the parquet—and this caused great confusion. One ridiculous incident I have often heard my mother relate. The *Cent Gardes* were stationed round the ball-room, immovable like statues, in their splendid uniforms and looking straight ahead, apparently seeing nothing and hearing nothing. My mother; one of the Esterhazy princesses (I don't remember which one); the Duchess of Sutherland; and Princess Menshikoff—all four very beautiful ladies—were chatting together, when a very eccentric, brilliant and handsome lady, Mrs. Charles Astor Bristed (one of the old American-Dutch family of Brevoort), came up to them and, after a few words of greeting, said suddenly, looking at one of these splendid young soldiers, and addressing Princess Menshikoff, who was as mad as herself: "Look at that young man; what a splendid fellow!" and she

stared at the man she was admiring. The other ladies, including my poor mother, who at first thought Mrs. Bristed must have had too much champagne, turned to look at the Apollo. Mrs. Bristed had, of course, spoken in French, and on purpose loud enough to be overheard by the young man. So here was a situation!—five very beautiful young women, in full ball dress and sparkling with precious stones, staring at a lad, and pronouncing him to be beautiful! Yet he never moved a muscle, nor looked at them, nor blushed! Then Mme. Menshikoff went a step farther: "He is certainly one of the most handsome men I have ever seen," she exclaimed, "and look at his legs—why he's like a god!" Still not a twitch, blush, or glance. "*Ma chère Princesse,*" exclaimed Mrs. Bristed, "he is certainly very beautiful, but I don't think he is alive." Still nothing on the part of the tortured boy in uniform, not the least indication that he had heard a word. My mother and the Duchess of Sutherland exchanged glances and were on the point of trying to entice the teasing ladies away from their prey. But it was too late; "Oh, *ma chère!*" exclaimed Mme. Menshikoff. "So you think that young Apollo is stuffed, do you? Well, we shall soon see," and drawing a diamond hairpin from her hair, she advanced, "I shall prick his leg with this pin, and see if the sawdust comes out!" What would have happened Heaven only knows, but just at that moment the Empress's sister, the Duchesse d'Albe, came up and Mme. Menshikoff and Mrs.

Bristed had to behave themselves. My mother said that the young guardsman showed not the slightest indication that he had heard a word, even when the beautiful young princess approached him with admiration in her eyes and a diamond pin in her hand to probe for sawdust in his defenceless leg. Surely such heroic stoicism and devotion to duty under fire deserved a cross of some kind!

Mrs. Bristed shortly afterwards rented Mme. Menshikoff's beautiful little house in the Rue Barbet de Jouy, and lived there entertaining most lavishly for some time, Mme. Menshikoff being forced to return to Russia. I liked Mrs. Bristed, because she always made a great fuss of me, always stuffed me with sweets and loaded me with toys, and also because she was beautiful and always exquisitely dressed; and from my very cradle I have never been averse to being fondled and kissed by pretty and well-dressed women. One thing I remember about Mrs. Bristed's beautiful house, which was a source of endless joy to me. She had a fireplace on a pivot (only wood was burnt) in the wall between her bedroom and boudoir, so that all she had to do, when she went from one room to the other, was to give the grate a push, and it swung round bringing a blazing fire to one room and presenting a very pretty panel of stained wood to the other; I used to push it about for a long time. I often wonder why such grates are not used now. This one was working more than fifty years ago. Alas! poor Mrs. Bristed died suddenly in her ball-

dress at Baden-Baden a few years later. It is the kind of death that, I think, she would have chosen. She was fond of dress and had exquisitely good taste; and to be blessed with what may be called a fine *sentiment de la toilette* is as rare a gift as the poetic faculty; for it is a born gift, and may not be acquired; just as the poet is born and not made. Surely it must be pleasant for such a one to leave this planet suddenly; unstained by drugs; not tired by bed or by the tears of friends; not disgraced by a ridiculous nightgown; but with just one wrench and plunge from life, no matter how agonizing for the moment, and then to soar to Paradise, still young and beautiful, and exquisitely dressed.

I referred to the ball given in New York for the late King Edward, when he was Prince of Wales. We happened at that moment to be over on that side, and so, of course, as the Prince and all his suite were old friends of ours, we saw a great deal of them. As I have said, my father and mother had had a lot of invitations to give away, and although they were very careful to discriminate and use their best judgment, and always to be kind and considerate, an immense number of hearts were broken, and the seeds of undying hatred planted in innumerable sweet bosoms. One young lady—I remember her name, for although I was a mere child it struck me as so funny—Martha Haines Butt—got to my father by some trick, threw herself on her knees before him, burst into tears, drew a knife, and said she should kill herself there and then if she could

not get an invitation. She was pretty, but rather rowdy in appearance, and my father hardly cared to take the responsibility of giving her the opportunity for which her soul longed. Still, at the same time, she was undeniably pretty and my father, like myself, always thought that a pretty woman should never be repulsed; so, like the clever diplomat he was, he adopted a middle course. He sent her to a very timid and very tender-hearted old American gentleman named Havemeyer, who was on the committee. Martha Haines Butt threw herself on her knees before old Havemeyer, wept, threatened suicide, and produced the knife. Havemeyer, frightened out of his life (he had a jealous wife, by the way, a fact known to my father), gave her a ticket at once and hustled her off the premises.

But all kinds of ridiculous things took place. When the young Prince came up to my mother to dance with him she noticed he was wearing white kid gloves that hung on his hands like wrappers —many sizes too big—and His Royal Highness explained that they had been sent to him anonymously, accompanied by a letter purporting to come from a lady who alleged she was young and pretty and said she was going to the ball, and that if she saw he was not wearing the gloves she would get close up to him and shoot herself! Hence these enormous coverings on the Royal hands. Then the floor suddenly gave way—it was only a subsidence, but it caused quite a little panic for a few minutes as "the atmosphere" (to write in the

language of the shilling shocker) "was charged with tense feeling: heart throbbings and the wingings of deep longings pulsated along every thrill of the dance music." The poor young Prince might have been throbbed or pulsated into trouble that night but for his wise and experienced protectors; for his suite was composed of men who knew all about throbs and pulsations. The Duke of Newcastle's wife, while he was still Lord Lincoln, had pulsated away from him with her Belgian Courier Opdebec; and his daughter, Lady Susan was already showing that inclination to throb illicitly that culminated in her flying from the Vane Tempest, to whom she legally belonged, to seek refuge in Paris with her lover, and eventually to die, poor lady, almost alone in Trouville.

Then, old Lord St. Germans knew the world and its ways backwards. He had a house in Dover Street, No. 36, now inhabited by a dressmaker, but I used to know every room of it in his day. It was in this house, by the way, that the young Jew solicitor's clerk, Benjamin Disraeli, first met a man of any real social distinction, Lord Lyndhurst, and afterwards Sir Robert Peel. Old Lord St. Germans was always very genial and kind to the young Prince whereas his governor, Bruce, and the Opdebec-embittered Duke of Newcastle were rather severe. Then there was the handsome and charming Colonel Teesdale, the Prince's personal chum: and the medical adviser, Dr. Acland, whom, years later, I saw a great deal of in England. All these people protected the young Prince from the Mar-

tha Haines Butts and girls of the kid-glove school. Another ridiculous thing, by the way, happened that night connected with Lord Hinchingbroke, later Lord Sandwich, brother of that most delightful and popular of men, Oliver Montagu of the Blues, whose death in Egypt the same year as that of the Duke of Clarence caused such grief to all. Well, that night, more than sixty years ago, Lord Hinchingbroke was talking to my mother in New York at the Academy of Music, or Opera House, when he suddenly clapped both hands to his face and fled without a word! My mother thought he had gone mad—for I repeat, the atmosphere was "tense," "pulsating," and "throbbing"—but the fact was that he had only been suddenly attacked with a violent bleeding at the nose. He rushed into the first retiring or private dressing-room to which he came—it happened to be that of the young Prince—and very soon towels and basin and everything were covered with blood.

At that moment His Royal Highness accompanied by his somewhat dour governor, Bruce, entered, and great was the consternation of all, till poor Hinchingbroke explained. But that was not the end of the episode by any means. Everything provided for the Prince—basins, towels, brushes—everything—had been marked with his plumes and motto. By the way, Mrs. Paran Stevens—Marietta, the mother of the late Lady (Arthur) Paget—who with her husband, little Stevens, at that time kept the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where the Prince and

suite were staying, carefully collected and for years proudly displayed all this domestic regalia, which made the malignant old August Belmont —*le Diable boiteaux*—as he was called—say: "If Mrs. Stevens uses the Prince's crockery for long she will soon be referring to him as dear Bertie." Well, while some of these, all blood-stained, were being removed, as ill-luck would have it, one of old Gordon Bennett's reporters happened to pass by and saw them! What had happened? An attempt to assassinate the future King of England? What splendid copy for the *New York Herald!* No explanations would be entertained or even listened to for a moment. It was like the man in *Martin Chuzzlewit* who absolutely refused to believe that Queen Victoria did not live in the Tower of London, since he felt sure she ought to live there and therefore did live there. Here was the blood; there was the *Ich dien;* there were the plumes; what on earth more can you possibly want? No pikestaff was ever half so plain. "Extra Specials" by the million are daily built of fabric far more flimsy. Someone had evidently tried to murder the young Prince. The only question now for the reporter was, whose blood was it? Was it Blood Royal—the blood of the Tudors, the Plantagenets—or were these sadly significant stains simply sanguinary spurts from some silly servile seceder from Sing Sing? It was, on the whole, lucky that this thirst for further knowledge detained the reporter, for it gave time for Bruce to be sent for

and to explain. But the eager reporter laughed poor Bruce to scorn. Bruce? Tarnation snakes! Who was he? the Prince's Governor? Bah! What if he was? Nose bleed be damned—tell that to the marines. Good enough yarn for Piccadilly perhaps, but wouldn't wash in Broadway! No, siree! Not a little bit! Then Lord St. Germans came on the scene—his white hair and very apparent Earldom (for he had a decidedly committal countenance) had some slight effect. But still there were doubts; the famished tiger did not want to relinquish the nigger's fat leg. No, sir, not at all. Perhaps this handsome old man, blue riband and all, might be a liar. Liars were not unknown even in Congress. Baths and Garters did not necessarily exclude the exercise of sound vigorous mendacity! So the Prince himself had to be sent for (the owner of the peccant nose was still mopping it, and quite unfit for presentation), and then the man at last began to realize that it was on the whole unlikely that the honour and credit of all Great Britain should be thus imperilled merely to rob a poor reporter of his copy. So there were no sensational headlines in the morrow's *Herald,* that is, only the usual rich Bill-of-Fare. I have often heard the Prince of Wales in after years laugh over this ridiculous episode; and Henry Clews, the Wall Street operator (an Englishman by birth) was laughingly said by Travers to have regretted there was no gory publicity in the papers, as it might have caused a Bull or a Bear or something " in the Street."

CHAPTER III

The Prince of Wales and the deaf and dumb asylum. "Isn't he just too lovely." The foiled rape of the lock. The showman and the Prince and suite. Some inconsistencies and peculiarities of New York society. "Jim" Bennett. A dangerous drive. Young Bowes-Lyon. Prince Napoleon. Horace Greeley. Podsnappian prisoner. Purity and Vice. "I thought you might like your tooth brush." The Omniscience of Plon Plon. Princess Clothilde. Esther Guimon's awful revenge. The two "prenez gardes" from two different Imperial lips. The Empress and friends skating. Mme. de Canisy. Cora Pearl. Her idea of humour. Her triumph at Baden. Narischkins and Paul Demidoff.

THEN a few days later another comic incident occurred. A well-known New York divine named Muhnenberg had founded a deaf and dumb asylum just outside New York, at a place called Bloomingdale, I think; and in a weak moment Bruce was persuaded to allow the young Prince to accept an invitation to go out there. I may mention that nothing could ever be done without Bruce's consent, and that he was very arbitrary. For instance, while the Royal party was still in Canada, and the invitation came to visit the United States, the original suggestion was that a dinner should be given in New York in the Prince's honour. Bruce happened to be absent from Montreal for a few hours on the morning that the invitation

came and the Duke of Newcastle, my father, Lord St. Germans, Teesdale, and everyone else, including the young Prince himself, seemed to think it was all right and could see no objection. But when Bruce returned, he would not have it at any price. The Prince could not possibly be allowed to attend any public dinner, as he was far too young to reply to any toast. So that dinner had to be replaced by a ball; but perhaps, after all, Bruce regretted his decision later, for surely it would have been better to let a callow youth utter a few common-place compliments rather than to risk the perils of Miss Butts, the subsiding floor and the bleeding nose. But be this as it may, all the party went out to the deaf and dumb asylum, and after the wards had been inspected, they were ushered into a big hall with a stage at the end and a pulpit on each side of the stage. This was a kind of lecture hall for the inmates; and when the Royal party was seated in the front row, the poor sufferers trooped in and a man got up in each pulpit and began giving an account of the history and aims of the institution; while the one man spoke, the other explained in full what was being said with his hands in the deaf and dumb language. My mother sat directly behind the young Prince, and by her side sat a very pretty girl—a fact which, of course, did not escape the notice of His Royal Highness. Before the heavy pow-wow had travelled far—one man "orating" and the other following fast with his fingers—the pretty girl whispered to a girl friend sitting beside

her, "What lovely hair he has!" The smiling Prince half turned, looked at my mother, and bit his lip to keep from laughing. Then the girl, seeing she had been heard, began to whisper in German to her friend: "How I should love to have a lock of it as a keepsake! Isn't he just lovely? I wonder if I dare cut just a wee bit off. It's rather long—I wonder if he'd mind. I don't think he would—he looks so sweet and kind." Luckily for the young lady, neither the Duke of Newcastle nor Bruce understood German, but the Prince, who had heard, was blushing like a girl, and he turned his face, twitching with his violent effort to keep from exploding, to my mother, his pleading eyes begging her to keep the girls in order. But although she could understand German, my mother could not speak it; so she could only reply to the prayer in the Prince's dancing eyes with a sad explanatory smile that she was powerless. Then the pretty girl whispered to her friend: "He's such a darling, I don't think he'd mind a bit. Anyway, I'll risk it," and with that she stealthily drew from her pocket a small pair of scissors. My mother's hand was on her arm at once; and the Prince in front bowed over as if in prayer! Just then the oration stopped —only just in time. But all was not over yet. "Might I ask His Royal Highness and the members of his suite if they would be kind enough to step up on the platform here and sign their names in this album that we may preserve it in our archives as a memorial of this auspicious event."

Thus spake tongue and fingers from the pulpits. Bruce frowned, but the Prince had already risen, flying from the scissors that, although held in check by my mother, still menaced his flank; and so it was too late to draw back; and the members of the Royal party very sheepishly and reluctantly filed up on to the stage and one after the other signed his name in the book. When this was done and before anyone could leave the platform, voice and fingers called out, "One moment, gentlemen, just one moment," then a man seized a pole that was used to point out things on the blackboard, and then tongue and fingers began explaining at lightning speed as follows to the delighted congregation: "This, ladies and gentlemen"—and the fair head of the young Prince was gently tapped with the pole—"is Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, heir to the British Throne! This"—here not a tap from the pole, but a poke to indicate who was meant—"is the Earl of St. Germans. This"—and another indicating poke—"is the Duke of Newcastle. This"—but here the lingual and digital lecture came to sudden conclusion, for Bruce, black as a thundercloud, got the young Prince from the stage, and the others followed.

New York society is, and always has been a rather curious study. One tradesman is received into its bosom and another is contemptuously refused admission. In those days, for example, a man named Abraham Bininger, who kept a grocer's shop in Eighth Street, was received, and

so was good-natured, red-haired Arthur Leary, whose father sold hats under the Astor House. But millionaire shopkeepers, like Stewart and others, had no kind of social recognition. The sexton of Grace Church, a common working man named Brown, oddly enough was in those days the person who was regarded as being the chief authority as to who was who in Gotham. The Vanderbilts, although already multi-millionaires, were not received. Old Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald,* and his wife, of course, none of the élite would have anything to do with, although very often wicked old James (who, by the way, started his famous and most excellent journal, as he told Mr. Archibald, our consul in New York, by writing it out all himself on a board supported by two barrels in a cellar "down town") would often make use of their names in a libellous fashion; and after submitting to due castigation calmly publish in the *Herald* on the morrow: "Cowhided again," and give a long and spicy report of the matter. His wife was famous for her eccentricities and love for cocktails. One of her great jokes was to assume a high-sounding name. For instance, on one occasion the manager of the Ocean House in Newport, Rhode Island, was greatly delighted by a telegram engaging a suite of rooms for the Duchess of Sutherland, but was horrified when Mrs. Bennett (and Mrs. Bennett very much under the influence of alcohol) stumbled into his hall as the Lady of Dunrobin. They had

but two children, my dear friend Jim and a daughter Jeannette, who married "Ding-dong" Bell. Jim was a brick, and when his father on his deathbed sent for him and said that he had left him everything and nothing to the daughter, Jim refused to have his sister treated so, and said he would accept nothing unless the will were altered and she had her share.

Dear old Jim Bennett—I am speaking of the son, of course—at one time was himself addicted to alcoholic vagaries, but as a matter of fact he couldn't stand much; and I've seen a very few glasses of champagne transform this most kind, refined and courteous of gentlemen into a truculent ruffian. Once when a lot of us—the late Duke of Fife, then Macduff, was of the party, and so was one of the Furstenburg Princesses, to whom Jim was supposed to be engaged—breakfasted with him at the Pré-Catelan, in the Bois, he got drunk, and driving us back to town, galloped his four splendid horses down the Avenue du Bois at positively breakneck speed—nothing would stop him. The police knew him and would not interfere, for he was generous to them, and they ignored his eccentricities; we were all on top, of course, and couldn't get down, for he was racing; and so when we reached the house where he lived in the Champs Elysées, and he turned the leaders to gallop in, we should probably all have been decapitated by the top of the porte cochère, but that luckily the coach swerved and caught the side of the entrance instead of going

through. So we were saved. But the Furstenburg girl fainted; and Macduff (whose language to the grinning, sneering, drunken Jim was appallingly profane) and I took refuge in an adjoining English tavern where whisky and soda pulled us together. I have, of course, seen many chaps tipsy, people ranging from rulers and heirs-apparent to bookies, but I have never seen a man whom drink could change as it could Gordon Bennett. Sober, he was the kindest of men; drunk, a dangerous, quarrelsome devil. When engaged to be married he got drunk the morning of the wedding, let them all go to the deuce and never went to the church. A duel with the heartbroken bride's brother was the result. On another occasion, one morning I was trying a horse I'd just bought over some hurdles near the Tir aux Pigeons at the Bois, and young Bowes-Lyon from our Embassy (uncle of the Duchess of York) was with me. Jim Bennett cantered up and asked us to breakfast with him when we got back to town. He was staying at the Hotel Bristol then, in the little entresol King Edward, when Prince of Wales, always had. When we got there—about two hours after he left us in the Bois—we found him asleep on the sofa and the table only set for one. A half-empty bottle of sherry explained all to me, and I was for going away at once without rousing the tiger, but my silly companion insisted on waking him. Jim jumped up; glared at us; swore vilely; and then sprang on to the table, and kicked everything to the

devil! My companion pretended to be greatly offended, and swore he would never speak to Jim again. But that was, of course, all nonsense, for Bennett kept him supplied with pocket money, and when later on he got into disgrace at the Embassy with George Sheffield and Lord Lyons, Jim Bennett saved him from trouble. People conversant with the social matters of that time, and who can read between the lines will understand to what I allude. This silly chap died afterwards in Belgrade—I mean of course, young Bowes-Lyon. That was long ago. Jim Bennett gave up drink, took to a strange temperance beverage called Zoedone, and lived for many years—till quite the other day, in fact.

But to revert to the old Empire days and the strange adventures of well-known Americans in Paris, here is a comic incident. Prince Napoleon ("Plon Plon," so-called because that is supposed to represent the noise of a rifle, and the Prince was said to have funked crossing the Alma during the Crimean War and going to the relief of the gallant Bosquet) was, as I have said, very fond of my father; and, on one occasion, being about to give a dinner party to leading representatives of different nationalities in Paris—birds of passage and not members of the Diplomatic Corps or habitual residents—asked my father if there was anyone he could suggest; and my father suggested the great American Pressman, Horace Greeley, owner of the *New York Tribune*. My father hardly knew

him, but had met him a few nights before at Madame de la Valette's, and had been told of his power for good or for evil as a journalist in the States. So Greeley was invited, and, hearing who had suggested the invitation, wrote to thank my father. The night of the dinner arrived (it was to be given at the Maison Dorée) but no Greeley. Inquiries were made and it was discovered that the incredible, the astonishing, the marvellous (all the epithets of Mme. de Sevigné, please) had taken place. Poor Greeley had been arrested for debt and dragged off to Clichy just as he was coming to the Prince's dinner! The following day being one when prisoners could be visited, my father went to see him. What a sight it must have been! When my father told Prince Napoleon about it, Plon Plon roared with delight. There in the midst of all the gayest and most reckless young dogs in Paris, all the spendthrifts, all the maddest roués, all the *fils de famille* who were ruining their papas and galloping down the road to ruin, stood, pale, nervous, but resigned, the great, the virtuous Horace Greeley —the leader of all pure and holy thought in New York! He looked (I remember him well) like a mixture of Henry Ward Beecher and Horatio Bottomley. The same heavy, round, fat Podsnappian face: the same Chadbandistic atmosphere: something as if you could imagine Pecksniff looking out of a full moon at a revival meeting in Wales. But that was not all: the holy man was not alone with fellow prisoners, fellow sufferers let us say

(although they were not suffering, but drinking champagne in tumblers); but it was visiting day, and all the leading demi-mondaines were there to comfort and caress their comrades in vice: the sweet little things had come with their noses shaded by the latest millinery creations from the Rue de la Paix to share delicious husks with these half undressed, half tipsy, laughing and singing prodigal sons! Think of it! What a picture! And there in the midst of those laughing, singing, be-diamonded Magdalens stood Horace Greeley of the *New York Daily Tribune!* the predecessor of Whitelaw Reid! At least Peter, when the angel came to rescue him, was *asleep* between two soldiers. Here was Horace Greeley awake in Clichy, and my father was not an angel (far from it) and had not come to rescue him at all, but merely to tell him how sorry the Emperor's cousin was that he, the saintly Horace, had not been able to come to the Maison Dorée the night before. And while they were talking together behold, an apparition! Mrs. Greeley stood in the doorway, horror-stricken, petrified at the sight of this pandemonium of vice. The poor lady had come to see her husband, but very certainly had not expected to find him with such surroundings. She stood in the doorway; Greeley and my father advanced to her. "No, I won't come in," she faltered, "I can't stay—I musn't stay." Then turning to her husband and holding out the instrument in question she said humbly, *"I thought, Horace, you might like your tooth brush!"*

"Plon Plon" was an extraordinary man. He was endowed with most of the greatest gifts Providence can bestow, and yet he never succeeded in anything. It was exactly the story of the good fairy endowing the child with all good things, and then an evil fairy coming to stultify them all. He was extremely handsome: had the face of his illustrious uncle, but was a much bigger, finer man than the *petit* Corporal. He was extremely clever and most exceptionally well read. There was nothing, in fact, he did not know. He was as bad as Macaulay or Gladstone in that respect. You could never hit on any subject unknown to "Plon Plon." A Russian, Mestchersky, tried to catch him out once, and at a dinner given by Anatole Demidoff began discoursing on Roumanian folklore and superstitions. But Prince Napoleon knew all about them, more even than Mestchersky did; for speaking of a love charm of a sprig of basil plant that it seems must spring from seed carried to the garden in the mouth on St. George's morning: the lips must mumble a depression in the soil in which the seed is sown, and the lips must cover it with loose earth, and the water with which to water it must be brought every morning in the mouth. Yes, so far they both agreed; but then Prince Napoleon asserted that the watering had to take place every morning exactly at the moment the sun began to peep over the horizon—a minute too late and the charm wouldn't act, and new seed would have to be sown the following year. This Mestchersky

denied; they had a bet about it; it was decided to write and consult a wise specialist living in Vienna on the subject, and of course "Plon Plon" won. He always did: he knew everything, and he quite frightened the old Duke of Hamilton once (the father of my friend, though very many years my senior, the late Duke—Angus) by telling him about some old laws, long obsolete, relating to salmon fishing in Scotland! And yet with all his brains and knowledge, and good looks and high position, "Plon Plon" was a dead failure and never succeeded in anything he ever undertook. He despised his cousin the Emperor, and the Emperor feared him. The Empress detested him, and even his beautiful and clever sister, Princess Mathilde, was afraid of him; and so was his poor wife, Princess Clothilde, Victor Emanuel's daughter. She was a very quiet, ugly woman, very religious, very kind and very simple, not at all the kind of wife for clever, brilliant, handsome, profligate "Plon Plon." My mother, who was very fond of her, made her a present one New Year's day of the first sewing machine the poor Princess had ever seen. Calling on her a few days later at the Palais Royal, she found the Princess, aided by her lady-in-waiting, the Duchess d'Abrantès, with all the joy of a child using the machine to make some underclothing for the poor!

Prince Napoleon had a caustic tongue and could be very insolent when he liked, which may, perhaps, in some measure, but not altogether, account for

his lack of success. But once he found his match in Esther Guimon whom I only knew, of course, when she was old, but she told me the story herself. It was in her young days and when "Plon Plon" was lavishing money on Cora Pearl. One night the Prince was supping at Guimon's house in the Rue Chateaubriand with Gramont-Caderousse, Vallombrosa, Prince d'Henin, and others; and when everyone started to leave "Plon Plon" calmly announced his intention of staying the night there; and the fair Esther who was then supposed to be under the protection of Duke Ratibor made no objection. In the morning the Prince was in one of his worst fits of bad temper and very insulting. "I can't imagine what the devil can possibly have induced me to stay," he exclaimed (and here I may say I give the conversation exactly as I remember Guimon telling it to me). "I am sorry you should say so, *Monseigneur!*" "Are you indeed? not so sorry as I am. Why, I can't imagine what that ass Ratibor can possibly see in you to admire!"

"Oh, *mon* Prince, I can't tell you how sorry I am to hear you say that, for so far as my experience goes you are the most desirable man in Paris; you have everything: wit, grace, extraordinary personal beauty—you are absolutely perfect, except—" and the artful woman stopped. "Except what?" exclaimed "Plon Plon"—"Oh, I can't tell your Highness—I dare not." "But I insist: I must know." "Your Highness would never forgive me—I dare not tell you." "But you shall, you

must. I insist!" "Oh, I dare not—you would never forgive me, and besides I can't prove what I say, because you can never perceive it yourself, and because, being who you are, all your courtiers will lie to you about it, and when you ask them swear it isn't true." "Plon Plon" was now thoroughly interested and excited. "Look here, my dear *petite* Esther," he said very earnestly, "please forgive me for all the rude things I said to you just now, and please, I beg of you, tell me very frankly and plainly—the more bluntly the better—what exactly the defect in me is—the one and only defect as you were kind enough to tell me. I faithfully promise not to be angry with you. I give you my word for it. Now do speak out plainly, I beseech you." "Well, *Monseigneur,*" replied Esther, "as you command me to do so and give me your word of honour to forgive me, I will speak out very plainly, and I tell you, *brutalement, mon* Prince—your breath is intolerably offensive!" (what she literally said, as "Plon Plon" asked her to be blunt, was—*"Vous puez de la gueule!"*). The Prince jumped up like a lunatic and rushed out of the house; and all that day and week, and for months and months after was breathing in everyone's face—man, woman and child—and asking "is there anything wrong with my breath?" and then, groaning in spirit when the invariable reply came, "Nothing whatever, *Monseigneur,*" for he remembered how truly Esther had predicted that never can Princes hope to hear the truth in such a matter. The wicked

Guimon had made his life, for the time being, a burden to him, for he felt sure that all his courtiers were deceiving him. He firmly believed Guimon must have spoken the truth, or why did she say so vile a thing? She couldn't, of course, have invented it—there was no earthly reason for her to do so! The poor Prince with all his extensive reading and very wide experience had evidently quite forgotten all about the *spretæ injuria formæ.*

The resemblance of "Plon Plon" to his illustrious uncle was very striking. He had not the ascetic look that distinguished the great Emperor in his early days and even up to the time of his coronation, as can be seen by the miniature by Isabey, but his face, not figure—for "Plon Plon" was rather a big man—was what costermongers call the "dead spit" of Napoleon when he began to wax fat, just before his divorce from his benefactress, Josephine. I remember once, when my mother and I (then almost a baby) were staying with some friend in Brittany, and the Prince's yacht, the *Prince Jerome,* was at Cherbourg, he invited us over there to dinner. By the way, Maurice Sand, son of the famous George Sand, was an officer on board. We had to be rowed out to the yacht that in honour of my mother was illuminated with Chinese lanterns. It was a splendid moonlight night, and as my mother, holding up her skirts (long dresses were worn then) followed closely by me, was carefully going up the companion ladder, a grave voice said from above: "Prenez garde,

Madame," and looking up we saw "Plon Plon" standing waiting to receive us, his arms folded across his breast (he, like many other Bonapartes, always adopted Napoleonic attitudes), and as the moonlight played on his face and figure it was like a vision of the Great Man—as if the hero of Marengo and Austerlitz had risen from the tomb.

Oddly enough, these very words, "Prenez garde," were addressed to myself by another member of the Imperial Family; namely, the Emperor, some years later. It was at the Cercle des Patineurs. I was only just entering my teens, and it was during my winter holidays from my school in England. I was always a pretty good skater, but was not quite sure about skating backwards; and not wishing to make a fool of myself before everybody, I left the shed where all the fashionable people were assembled, and betook myself to a more distant and secluded part of the lake where I could practise at my leisure, and where if I fell it would not matter. I began skating backwards, not turning to see if all were clear behind, and was getting on very well, when suddenly I skated into somebody's arms; two hands in white woolen gloves were playfully put over my eyes; and a well-known voice said "Prenez garde, mon enfant." It was the Emperor. He was with my cousin, Edgar Ney, and Achille Murat. They had seen me coming; but His Majesty, who, of course, knew me well, would not let them give me warning, but stood still, greatly amused, awaiting the inevitable collision. As a matter of fact, the

Emperor was a very bad and awkward skater, and I believe he had gone to that secluded part, like myself, to be able to have a little exercise without risking ridicule. But if he were awkward, how divinely graceful was his consort on the ice—in fact, everywhere; and that day I saw a vision of beauty and grace that will remain in my memory till I die—the Empress skating between Mme. de Pourtalès and Mme. de Gallifet. They were well apart from each other, just hands linked, and as they came slowly swinging past me smiling recognition, as I respectfully took off the little astrachan skating cap I was wearing, and which had been sent to me by a Russian friend in St. Petersburg, I wondered why the ice didn't melt under such delicious pressure. The Prince of Wales (of course, I mean King Edward) was there that day with the late Duke of Beaufort, and I remember the very funny and quizzical way in which he asked me how I liked the big public school I had just entered.

"Plon Plon" was as ardent admirer of the fair sex, as was his cousin the Emperor, but quite apart, of course, from such vulgar (though terribly costly) intrigues like those with Cora Pearl and Anna Deslions, of the guests at fashionable gatherings, Mme. de Canisy reigned supreme. She was a statuesque Juno kind of woman whom I never liked. Of course, I was only a boy and did not know much about things—only in the fourth form of Love's Academy, as it were, and Mme. Canisy may really have been a more charming lady than I thought,

but she was very unpopular, and her influence over "Plon Plon" was certainly bad, and widened the breach already existing between the Palais Royal and the Tuileries. The Empress abhorred, and I was told the Emperor feared her. Anna Deslions (another of "Plon Plon's" flames) was, of course, long before my time, but I knew Cora Pearl very well, although, of course, not in her zenith. She was the daughter of the author of *Kathleen Mavourneen,* which, by the way, she was very fond of singing. Emma Crouch was her name, and she began her career by running away from a convent school in Boulogne with a barber. By the way, barbers seem to exercise some peculiar fascination over wayward women, for my old friend Leonide Leblanc lost the most extravagantly generous protection of the rich American Louis Tiffany (no relation of the jeweller) by "adopting" a young coiffeur. Cora (very appropriately in this case, of course, Greek for Virgin) and Polly Skittles who died only the other day, came out—jumped out —together—Skittles and Purl. The French made Purl into Pearl, knowing nothing about the drink. Cora was a very ugly woman, but was said to be well-made. She was an amiable, but very stupid woman, and very fond of playing coarse, silly monkey tricks. I remember lunching at her house once in the Rue des Bassins when she put her hand into a dish of cutlets or something and put a large dripping piece of whatever it was on the head of Ferdinand Bischoffscheim. He took it very meekly and smiled

a weak Semitic smile through the veil of thick sauce that covered his face. But the Duke of Hamilton, who was there, seeing her put her hand into the dish again, cried: "Damn you, Cora, if you put that on my head I'll strangle you." Cora shrieked with laughter—that was her idea of fun. Speaking of her and the Duke of Hamilton (who, although almost old enough to be my father, was my bosom chum), I saw a very funny thing years before that at Baden-Baden. Cora was gracefully sailing into the Kursaal, all dressed in white satin and white lace, covered with diamonds and pearls, on the arm of Salamanca, the Jew banker of Madrid (who committed suicide some years later and explained in a letter that he did so because he found life colourless and tasteless, possessing everything, "even good health," he said, thus having nothing to desire and live for), when they were very politely and firmly stopped by an official with a big gold chain round his neck, and Cora was told her presence would cause a scandal and she must retire. I, with two other English boys from my school, was standing by, and I remember remarking that the train of Cora's dress was so extravagantly long that it had not yet entirely got into the room when she was forced, so to speak, to double back and retire. We callow chickos, of course, thought all was now over, and the eclipse final. But not a bit of it; lo and behold! within half-an-hour Cora and her red hair and white jewels and her interminable white dress, again appeared in the doorway triumphant, for this

time being on the arm of the Duke of Hamilton (whose hair, by the way, almost matched hers in colour), whose mother was a Princess of Baden, her progress was unimpeded; in fact, all the Casino officials bowed to the ground as she advanced. I very distinctly remember how I (little beast) swelled with pride as I went forward and was warmly greeted by the duke and Cora, and how I was envied by my companions. Cora delighted—positively revelled in the most wild and reckless extravagance, and no doubt she was quite right, for in her special profession it is more than half the battle to keep in the limelight and have all the drums incessantly beating. Prince Napoleon sent her once a huge van-load of the most expensive orchids. She gave a supper party, strewed the orchids over the floor and dressed as a sailor, danced the hornpipe, followed by the Can-can over them. A very handsome young Irishman I knew, Jim Whelpley, realized all he possessed—about £80,000—and gave it to her. She is credited with having spent it all in two months. But her best luck was when she had Prince Napoleon, Narischkin, and Paul Demidoff, all going together. " Plon Plon " at that time was, it is true, gradually receding into the arms of Mme. de Canisy (cold, I should think, after those of Cora) but still he formed a very nice and substantial background for the extraordinary antics of the other two. Narischkin was fabulously rich—they were peasants originally and the name was Yarischkine; but that being obscene in Russian, an N was substituted for

the Y when they became connected with Peter the Great; they always scorned to take a title—but he was a very weak and sickly man, who seemed only to live to throw away money—not necessarily ostentatiously, but still to throw it away. Paul Demidoff (nephew of vile old Anatole) on the contrary was strong as a gladiator, and as handsome as an Apollo, and almost if not quite so rich as the other; a wild, reckless, insolent, splendid devil with plenty of the savage of the Tartar about him; the kind of Romeo who would never take the trouble to clamber up to any Juliet, but would whistle for her to open her casement and jump down into his arms, and then later on toss her up to the balcony again, covered with jewels and cheques should she care for such things. I knew him very well: Narischkin, hardly at all. He was an interesting study, very handsome (his head was that of the young Augustus, and this is odd, for the Demidoffs were of very common origin) and amusing; but really and truly, and most comprehensively to be described as a cad. For example (and this I know for a fact, and many years afterwards when he was at Vichy and in my presence, asked about it, he only laughed) he, out of sheer devilry and cruelty, bribed, with the promise of a big sum, poor Barucci, whom he knew to be consumptive, to sit between open doors and windows in the Grand Seize at the Café Anglais, while he deluged and drenched the shuddering Phryne with Seltzer water, roaring with laughter all the time. Well, Cora had him and his compatriot on the

string at the same time, and this is how it worked out. Narischkin would hear one day that Paul Demidoff had given Cora say, a necklace worth five thousand pounds (and Cora took good care to keep both of them well posted as the saying is) and he would at once go and buy her, say, a rivière, worth twice that sum; Paul, on hearing this, would send Cora something of still greater value; Narischkin on learning what Paul had done, would go one better, and so on *ad infinitum*. What a game for Cora! And yet she died poor. The last time I saw her was at a race meeting at Maisons Lafitte, where I had a horse running. She looked old and ill. I made her laugh by telling her Paul Demidoff (a fat widower by that time, with two children) had become religious. She had not, of course, seen him for years. Cora died penniless, but as she had always been kind and generous to others in her profession, so in her latter days they took good care of her and she was never in want at any time. Her career was always a mystery to me, for she was, as I say, very ugly, and not at all amusing, except in her extravagance—as when she hired the Théâtre des Bouffes, sent tickets to all her friends —I had one, but was in England at the time—and appeared as Cupidon, almost nude; that is, with no clothing on worth mentioning, but covered from head to foot with jewels—literally so, for in one last extravagant gambol she threw herself flat on her back and flung her legs up in the air to show the soles of her shoes that were one mass of diamonds.

CHAPTER IV

Narischkin and Anatole Demidoff. Paul Demidoff and the Sancy diamond. Paul and Comte P. "A million, yours for nothing, nobody the loser; and no risk." Duc de Morny. Awful recollection of the last time I saw him to speak to. Mme. de Morny. Duc de Sexto and the joke of King Alfonso. Tragic death of Mme. de Corzana. Alphonse Daudet and Duc de Morny. The Duke's unvarying advice to a puzzled playwright. Persigny and his Duchess. Gross insult to Queen Victoria at the French Embassy in London. "Duc darling!" "We call him the Spaniard, don't we, dear?" Eccentric young Duc de Gramont-Caderousse. Strange stories about him. Ghastly last dinner to his boon companions. The beautiful Comtesse de Castiglione. The British Admiral and the spiritualizing influence of her beautiful bare feet on his Ship's Company. The Emperor's joke about Miss Beckwith.

BEFORE leaving Narischkin I must chronicle one incident in the life of this weak, consumptive, millionaire voluptuary. The property of San Donato, near Florence, gives the title of Prince to whosoever acquires it, without the need of any Royal Patent. Anatole Demidoff had bought San Donato, but as he had married Plon Plon's beautiful and clever sister, Princess Mathilde, he was quite willing to let the man in the street think he belonged to the Russian nobility (which no Demidoff ever did) and allowed himself to be called Prince Anatole Demidoff instead of Prince of San Donato. But Narischkin one day at the Jockey Club in the Rue

Scribe scratched out the word " Prince " before the Anatole and wrote: " Il n'y a pas de Prince Demidoff." A duel was the result. Old Anatole was as hideous as his nephew Paul was handsome. His debaucheries had brought on partial paralysis and his tongue hung out of his mouth like a dog's. He slapped his wife's face one night before everyone at the Opera and she left him for ever. When he died he left all his property including the rich mines in the Urals, San Donato, and the famous Sancy diamond to Paul. Now about this Sancy diamond I must tell an interesting story. Paul used to walk about with it loose in his pocket, as if it were merely a cigarette case, and one day he came to the apartment in the Place Vendôme of my friend Comte de Jonage and said: " Will you let me empty my pockets here as I don't want the bother to go home? I'm going to spend the night among the thieves in the Quartier Mouffetard with Goutaut Biron and I don't want to be robbed." It used, by the by, to be not unusual for people to visit the underworld of Paris: I went with the late Lord Sackville (then Lionel Sackville West) from our Embassy one night, as I will narrate later. De Jonage consented and Paul Demidoff emptied his pockets, taking only the necessary money with him and promising to send his servant round for the things the following day. The Sancy diamond was among the things left: and this, of course, de Jonage took good care to lock up safely in his *coffre fort,* making all the other things into a parcel for the servant on the

morrow. He was out when Demidoff's man came, and so only the parcel, and *not* the Sancy, was given. De Jonage naturally expected Paul to come or send for it at once—but nothing happened! A whole week passed and he never met Demidoff. At last, one day he came across him in the Champs Elysées. Paul greeted him in the usual way; said the evening among the thieves had been very amusing, and asked after Mme. de Jonage. Then the Count said, "I suppose you noticed, Paul, I didn't send you back quite everything the other day. When are you going to send for it?" Demidoff looked surprised for a moment then exclaimed: "So it's you who've got my ticket for the Dog Show, is it? Thank God! I thought I'd lost it." Pure pose, of course, but rather funny and quite typical of the man.

I have another rather odd recollection of Paul Demidoff. We met one evening at some shop, I forget where, by accident; we were both rushing through Paris; he from Vichy to Russia, and I from Trouville to London. He asked me to dine with him at once and without dressing; so we went to Paillards and up into a *Cabinet particulier,* but in passing through the public dining-room I saw and nodded to a man I knew who was dining alone. Demidoff asked me who he was, and during dinner I told him the man's story. He was of very good family and at one time rich, but had lost all his money at the old Cercle Malesherbes (afterwards the Eclaireurs) at cards, and been

forced to go into Government employ and was then Tresorier and Receveur-General at an important town in Normandy, a very good, well-paid, and responsible berth, but one that kept him from Paris, so that I had not seen him for some time. This seemed somewhat to interest Demidoff who was himself a terrible gambler; and so as our *tête-à-tête* dinner gradually became less and less interesting to both of us, at the end of it he suggested we should have my friend up. So up he came. Now what happened was really astonishing. Demidoff, who had a bad cold, had been drinking very heavily during dinner and, in fact, told me he had been swallowing buckets of *fine champagne* all the day; and when my friend the Government Official, the Treasurer, if you please, of an important, prominent town appeared, I saw to my amazement that he, too, was *dans les vignes du Seigneur,* or at least, not far off from their restful umbrage. I had some letters to write, and having introduced my friend, Count C. P., to Demidoff, started on my correspondence, not paying any attention to their conversation. Suddenly I realized Demidoff was saying: "Do you mean to tell me that I could take any amount of them and dispose of them at once without danger?" "Yes, any amount—millions' worth, and without the slightest danger." "What are you talking about?" I asked. My friend looked a little confused, but then said, "Oh, you know, the Rente is being converted just now." "Yes." "Well, I was just telling the Prince here that my office at——

is simply packed with it—millions' worth of it." "Well, what of that?" I said. I glanced at Demidoff and to my surprise saw his handsome face ablaze with excitement. As my friend said nothing, I repeated my question. "Well, what of it?" Then Demidoff explained—"Why he tells me anyone could take any amount he liked and realize at once without the slightest danger." "*Absolument,*" said P. "They're bearer shares, of course, as you know, *payables au porteur.* My place is stacked with them, those that are being returned against the new issue. Anyone could take up a bundle of them, go to London, and get the money at once." "But," I said, "you as Treasurer are, of course, responsible for their safety; they don't belong to you." "No, but suppose I was robbed——" "Well, that's hardly likely, I should think. I suppose you have them where nobody but responsible people can get at them." "Yes, of course, but——" My friend stopped and looked to Demidoff. "Suppose he was robbed *on purpose!*" suggested the Prince. I gazed at my friend; he looked silly and laughed, and said nothing. Then it dawned on me: these two, the French financial official, and the Russian millionaire, were purely and simply sketching out and contemplating with perfect complacency, not to say approval, an ordinary felony—M. le Prince J. Wild discussing business possibilities with M. le Comte J. Shepherd—*rien que ça!* Incredible perhaps, but absolutely true nevertheless; and

not, indeed, even so astonishing to anyone acquainted with the peculiar mentality and code of ethics of the Russian, especially of the Russian aristocrat. He absolutely ignores the difference between *meum* and *tuum;* if he sees anything he wants he takes it; and if you find him out, laughingly gives it back to you, not even pretending he purloined it for a joke. He wanted it; he took it; you want it back; here it is; *voilà,* you must understand! My friend, seeing my look of amused amazement, stammered out—"Nobody could really suffer, you know; nobody would lose a penny—the Government would be compelled by law to make good every centime. I, of course, should get dismissed for culpable negligence, but then——" "Oh, that's nothing," interrupted the Prince. "You naturally would be well looked after!" Then he burst out laughing. "*Grand Dieu!* what an idea! I see it all! You let me take a few millions' worth; I go to London: you take good care not to discover anything, and so have them stopped till I've had time to get the money in London: You get kicked out; we meet in Florence and share—*et violà! Bonjour, M. Pantlon! Pas plus difficile que cela! c'est parfait!*" and the Prince laughed and rubbed his hands. "Well," I said, as I rose to go, for I had to meet my servant and catch a train; "good luck. You'll both be in the *bagne* soon. Let me have your address, Paul, when you get to New Caledonia." I left them still discussing the matter, but evidently nothing

came of it, for my friend kept his berth. I didn't see Demidoff again for some years. The last time I saw him was at Vichy: he was very ill then; his liver was wrong. I remember, when strolling together between drinks at the Grande Grille, he pointed to a picture dealer's shop and asked me to go in and ask the price of a certain picture, as he might be recognized if he went himself. He waited in the park; and when I came back and told him the price he positively howled with fury and disgust: "Good God!" he cried. "That picture came from San Donato, and that villain is asking nearly double what he gave me for it!" He left legitimate children (one was at the Russian Embassy in London just before the war), but he had two sons in Paris by Celine Montaland—by far the most beautiful actress of her day and that's saying a great deal. Celine died of diphtheria caught from one of these boys whom she was nursing herself like the devoted mother and sweet and tender-hearted woman she was.

But to return to the good old times, when you could jump on an ichthyosaurus and have a gallop in the Bois, I must say a few more words about the people who used to come to my mother's salon in that Pliocene period. Morny was one; the Emperor's illegitimate brother by the Comte de Flahaut, and of course, and without the least doubt, the person who principally engineered the *coup d'état*. He was very kind to me as a baby and used to send me bon-bons and toys, very often by

a young Englishman whom I knew afterwards to be Hancock, later on the jeweller in Bond Street. Very many years later when he was an old man, Hancock told me he had known Morny, when he, Morny, was very hard up and living in a small apartment over the stables of Mme. de Souza in the Champs Elysées—the house occupied recently by the Duc de Massa. He used to go there and take very small orders from the young Comte for giving to fair ladies he admired. But when the *coup d'état* came; hey presto! all was changed. Morny became duke and Minister of the Interior, and the first time Hancock waited on him at the Ministry of the Interior, Morny jumped up smiling and clapped him on the back and said: "How are you, Hancock? This is better than the little rooms over the stable, isn't it?" He was a great favourite with the ladies, and I shall never forget the last time I saw him. It was not long before his death. I breakfasted with him and the Duchess (she was a Russian, a Troubetzkoi) and I can't now remember why, because I was a very young child and brought there by my male nurse who came for me afterwards. But I can never forget that dismal repast. I was alone with husband and wife, and they hardly ever spoke to me, or, in fact, to each other. He was at one end of the long table, and sat shuddering and shivering, muffled up in thick furs, although it was very hot weather and the windows were open; his face absolutely colourless (he was bloodless, *vidé*, empty, nothing but the envelope of flesh left), ner-

vously tearing open letters and then putting them aside unread; every now and then looking at me and smiling a sad smile and saying a kind and playful word; and she (they called her the White Mouse) silent, pale, fair, sad, at the other end, perpetually smoking cigarettes, never ceasing; putting a lighted cigarette down while she swallowed something, and then putting it back into her mouth and then lighting another. It was indeed a *déjeuner macâbre.* It was all up with the poor Duke; the Paphian Goddess had worn him out in his enthusiastic loyalty to her: Aphrodite had laid him low and soon after beckoned him across the Styx; and his young widow cut off all her fair curls and after the Russian custom put them on his body as he lay in the coffin. My father, who went to see his old friend, said the sight was strange; youth seemed to have come back to the handsome well-known face as he lay there with the broad red riband of the Legion of Honour; the sparkle of countless decorations gleaming through the shorn golden curls of his widow. She with her short hair looked like a boy for a long time, I remember; for she, her children and I, used to romp and play about together in the little garden of their villa at Deauville—the town he founded. She afterwards married the Spanish Duc de Sesto (" Pépé " Alcanices, as they called him in Madrid) and about him and his rather servile attitude towards Alfonso XII (who was always full of fun) a very popular Spanish nobleman, who must be nameless, told me the following

story: Only certain grandees of Spain are allowed to be in the King's bedroom when he gets up, but the Duke of Sesto (or really it ought to be Sexto) was one of these, and very seldom missed the great honour and privilege of seeing His Majesty leave his couch. One morning, however, he was absent from his accustomed place in the group of grandees in the Royal bedroom. Alfonso said nothing, and seemed to notice nothing; and as it was contrary to all etiquette to speak to the King except in reply, nothing on the subject was said. But Alfonso had not been up long before his face broke into a smile: he stooped down and *looked under the bed:* then he *opened the night table* and looked there: then he turned and explained, "I am looking for Pépé, where is he?"

Morny had only four children—legitimate, of course, I mean: two girls and two boys. One of his daughters, Mme. de Corzana, died in most tragic circumstances. She was not seriously ill at all, merely a slight cold. Lord Dupplin, Raymond Seillière, Prince Melissano and I, were with her at 2: she received us in bed, but she was sitting up, half dressed in fact; smoking, laughing and full of fun; and there was so little anxiety about her that her brother the young duke (he died the other day), who was devoted to her, was playing lawn tennis that afternoon in the Bois with some of the Rothschilds. At 4 she was dead, and at 7 her body was *black.* Dr. Chairou—a most extraordinary charlatan, at that time the fashion in Paris (he died not

long after in a most horrible way at Nice) had prescribed by a slip of the pen an overdose of salicylate of soda! Chairou called at 5, expecting, no doubt, merely to have a pleasant chat with his charming patient, but when the concierge said, " Mme. la Comtesse est morte! " He only exclaimed, " Oh, really, I'm so sorry. Then as I'm very busy I won't go up," and got back into his carriage and drove away. Both he and the English chemist who made up the prescription might, of course, have got into very serious trouble, but the young duke would not take proceedings.

By the by, Alphonse Daudet once told me a funny story about the Duc de Morny. When young Daudet first came to Paris, Morny very kindly attached him to his household as a kind of supernumerary secretary—nothing really serious, of course, in the way of occupation, but merely to give the young fellow a nominal office that would carry some weight in society, very much as Disraeli used Jim Daly, merely as a " show boy " as Lady M. called him; Algernon Turnor and Monty Corry being, of course, Dizzy's serious secretaries. Daudet's only chance of seeing his patron was in the morning when the duke was dressing, and so the young man would often go there and pour out into Morny's interested and sympathizing ears (for the duke was a playwright himself and " M. Choufleury restera chez lui " is by him) his latest plot and scheme for a Comedy. The entanglement, the embroglio, the putting the characters into extra-

ordinary and dramatic and interesting situations, was always easy enough; the thing was how to disentangle, how to explain and readjust and prepare for the happy ending: how to get *a deus ex machina* who would appear just before the fall of the curtain, and being cognizant of all, would put everything right. Morny's idea was always and forever the same (and Daudet in telling the story would imitate the duke shaving). "But, my dear boy, it's very easy; all you have to do is to introduce *un médecin; homme du monde; ami de la famille!*" Always the same and only straightener of chaos—"*Médecin; homme du monde; ami de la famille!*"

Another one of the *coup d'état* conspirators who was constantly at our house was the Duc de Persigny, but he is not so worthy of notice as his extraordinary wife. She was more than eccentric and the daughter of a mad mother—a kinswoman of mine by marriage, I am sorry to say—the old Princesse de la Moskowa. It is related of the Princess that when driving away from the church with her husband after her marriage she undressed herself and threw her clothes out of the carriage window—slippers, stockings—all flung into the faces of the affrighted pedestrians as the horses sped on! She had a splendid house, a palace really, in the Rue Lafitte near the Rothschilds' bank, but in her old age she became so miserly that she would not live in it, but stayed dressed in rags at the lodge of the concierge at the gate. Her daughter, Mme. de Persigny, was quite as mad. Napoleon III sent

Persigny (he was originally, as Kinglake truly says, a pastry cook, by name Fialin, but a good-natured, jolly old chap for all that) as Ambassador to the British Court; and he and his duchess started very successfully and with great splendour of hospitality their reign at Albert Gate. But a terrible thing soon happened. A ball was to be given at the Embassy to Queen Victoria, and for this occasion a very special and peculiar dress of great beauty was made in Paris for the duchess, who made the French artist swear secrecy, the Ambassadrice wishing to astonish the dowdy ladies of England by her splendour. Imagine her dismay when just after the arrival of the Sovereign, a lady appeared garbed in a robe exactly the same in every particular of texture, colour, and make! The dressmaker was a traitress; but Mme. de Persigny could not and would not stand it. She rushed up to the offending lady, a Scottish Peeress, and there, in her own ball-room at the French Embassy, before her husband could stop her, and in the very presence of the Queen, boxed the woman's ears! Great was the excitement; the Sovereign and Prince Consort left the house immediately and Persigny was at once recalled to Paris.

But that was a mere nothing in the strange career of the Duchess. She took lovers by the dozen; everyone knew it, of course, including her husband; but she cared not at all! All Paris knew it and all Paris laughed. Her chief lover for a long time was the eccentric young Duc de Gramont

Caderousse, whom she called "Duc Darling." My father and mother were staying once with the Persignys at their splendid country place, Chamarande, for a week, and it was like being in Bedlam. The Duchess acted like a lunatic as usual. One day, because she got an angry letter from "Duc Darling," she burst into tears and showed it to everyone—the house was full—including her husband, explaining her emotion by saying, "Oh, I love him so! *Je l'aime tant.*" Her last lover—or perhaps it is safer to say one of the last few—had been, as all Paris knew, a very swarthy Spaniard, by name Alvarez. Now both Persigny and his wife were very fair, but one evening at Chamarande, Mme. de Poilly (herself by no means a vestal) having expressed a wish to see the Duchess's last baby, down came the infant and nurse. The child was almost a mulatto! Everyone laughed and Mme. de Varennes said: "What is the baby's name?" to which the Duchess calmly replied. "Oh, we call him 'l'Espagnol'!" Then appealing to her husband, "Don't we, dear?" "Yes," replied Persigny smiling. "We call him 'l'Espagnol'!"

"Le Duc Darling"—Gramont Caderousse—was himself not a little of a lunatic. He ran through an immense fortune in a very few years, and died, whilst still young, of consumption brought on by his dissipation. He was not a pleasant companion (I remember him well as a child) for he had a most horribly hoarse, husky voice and was always spitting up blood into his pocket handkerchief. His

mad tricks were the talk of the town. He swore Rigolle Boche (a well-known Can-can dancer of those days) should walk naked across the Boulevard (from the Maison Dorée to the Café Anglais, about the distance of the Savoy Hotel to Romano's) and she did; the young duke giving the police enormous bribes to keep their backs turned. He made a big bet with the Duke of Hamilton that he would get himself arrested within half-an-hour without doing any harm or committing any offence whatever. The bet being taken, Caderousse told old Joseph, the head waiter (they were at the Maison Dorée) to have a ragpicker sent up to him at once. When the man came, the duke changed clothes with him; tumbled his hair about; slouched out in his rags into the Rue Lafitte; dipped his hands and face in the gutter; rubbed the dirt well in; and then shambled over to Tortoni's, sat at a table on the Boulevard and ordered a drink. Of course, no one recognized him, and the waiter naturally not caring to serve such a customer, refused. "Oh," said the duke in his hoarse voice, "I suppose you think I cannot pay, but I can, see!" and he pulled out a handful of gold. That was enough: a policeman was called, Caderousse was arrested and, of course, won his bet.

On another occasion when giving a dinner to a lot of people at the Café Anglais (my father and Prince Napoleon were among the guests), as he stepped out of his carriage the young duke let fall a louis, and the gold coin rolled into the mud. A

half-starved man in rags was passing: Caderousse stopped him. "Do you see that louis there? Well, if you'll pick it up with your teeth, not touching it with your hands, I'll give it you." The man frowned, hesitated, but then knelt down, pushed his face about in the mud, caught the coin with his lips, and then stood and faced Caderousse with it between his teeth. The duke smiled and nodded, but seeing the scowl on the man's face, said: "That's all right for the louis; of course, you've won it. But I can see you hate me for making you win it in that way, don't you?" "Of course I do," growled the man. "You're a brute, a *cochon,* you ought to be killed!" "Quite right," said the duke, "only I don't want to die just yet. But I tell you what I will do for you, just to relieve your feelings. I'll give you this," and he held up a thousand franc note, "if you'll hit me as hard as you possibly can, right in the face. I deserve it!" The words were hardly out of his mouth before he found himself sprawling in the gutter with both lips bleeding. "Thanks!" he gasped as he struggled to his feet, and gave the man the note. Then, bowing low, he said: "C'est parfait. Bon soir et bon appetit, mon ami." My father said he was a terrible sight when he came up to the Grand Seize where his guests were waiting. His face had to be bathed, and he fainted.

Poor Caderousse, his end was as spectacular as his short life. Knowing that he was dying, he invited a lot of his boon companions to dine with him. He couldn't leave his bed, but had it rolled

into the dining-room. "Don't mind me, mes amis," he said. "Don't be frightened. There's nothing the least serious the matter with me, only weakness, and I shall be up in a week. So enjoy yourselves. That's what I've asked you here for; the doctor told me it would cheer me up and do me good!" So the ball was set rolling and when the excitement was at its height, Caderousse had the doors locked so that no one could leave till he'd finished his "vale," pulled himself up in bed and said, "Imbéciles! Can't you see I'm dying? The doctor says I can't live many hours. I sent for you to show you what fools you are. It's living as you are doing that's brought me here to this; dying like a dog in a ditch. And yet I started with so much and so short a time ago; health, money, rank. Now you can go. Don't forget what I've told you. Be careful. Adieu!"

A lot of nonsense has been written about the famous beauty, the Comtesse de Castiglione (Virginia Oldoini) having been a spy at the Court of the Tuileries. As a matter of fact, she was an absolute fool, completely without brains, and lacking even ordinary intelligence. Her mind never developed with her body, but remained that of a mere infant. She did what she was told to do, that is, if it pleased her and flattered her. She knew she was beautiful because everyone said so, but that was all she did know. One of our Admirals (I forget his name now) had her to lunch with him

one day on his Flagship, somewhere in the Mediterranean. My father was of the party, and as he had told the Admiral about the absolute imbecility of the famous beauty, the gallant tar decided to see for himself. So he said: "My dear Countess, everyone knows you're the most beautiful woman in the world, but my friend here says you've got the feet and ankles of a Venus. Is it true?" She looked at my father and beamed with delight. "If he says so, it must be true, musn't it?" she said. The Admiral clasped his hands. "Oh, my dear Countess, dare I ask, might I pray, could I hope, ever, ever to see them?" Mme. de Castiglione, radiant with joy, held out a foot. "Mais certainement, très volontiers." A cushion was brought; the Admiral took off one shoe and stocking and my father the other, and the Countess then put her bare feet on the cushion, beamed still more and said: "Well, are you satisfied? They are beautiful, are they not?" The Admiral stooped and kissed one. "Oh, divine," he exclaimed. Then to see really how far this woman's folly would lead her, said: "But I have one more prayer, ma chère, ma belle Comtesse. The sight of such perfect beauty has a divine, a spiritualizing effect like music. Your bare feet and ankles are like inspirations of Palestrina or Bach; they educate, they uplift. They are prayers in the form of flowers. Oh, if my sailors could but see them! My dear Countess, have pity on those splendid fellows. Remember, day and night their very lives are in danger. Do

let my rough, but honest men see your feet. It will be as a Sacrament to them." "Très volontiers," beamed the Countess. So there she sat smiling for an hour with her bare feet and ankles on the cushion while the whole ship's company defiled before them! What a pity there was no reporter for a Sunday paper in the forecastle that afternoon to chronicle the exact words in which Jack expressed how his soul had been exalted by those bare feet and ankles of one of the most beautiful women of her time and certainly the most imbecile. Such a woman would have been as useful as a spy as an elephant would be as a dancing master. When she appeared at a fancy dress ball at the Tuileries as Salambo, naked from waist to chin save for heavy earrings which touched her breasts, the Empress had her ordered out of the room. But she was not the only daringly-dressed lady there that night. One of the Miss Beckwiths (Americans and very charming; one of them married one of her compatriots and the other Lord Leigh) was not overburdened with covering; and the Emperor said to Castel-Bajac. "Who is that pretty girl?" "Mlle. Beckwith, Sire." He pronounced it "Beckweese." "Belle cuisse!" exclaimed the Emperor, pretending not to have heard aright. "Diable! Elle est bien nommée par exemple!"

CHAPTER V

Princess Pauline Metternich. Worth, the Lincolnshire lad. Her exquisite taste in dress and inextinguishable refinement. Isabella II of Spain. Downing Street responsible for her wild conduct. The plot. The Quai d'Orsay outwitted. Don François d'Assisi. Monseigneur Baür, the handsome young Christianized Jew millionaire who blessed the Suez Canal on its inauguration. Why he was baptized and how he returned to the Synagogue. What the Empress said. The Empress and the Franco-Prussian War. What I had direct from Lord Lyons. The Prince Imperial. Why he went to Zululand. The last time I saw him to speak to. Knole. Curious coincidence in Paris. The Duc de Montmorency. No luck. The Duc de Mouchy. His marriage to Princess Anna Murat. King Edward's announcement to me: "Poor Mouchy is dead." Queer story about Mouchy and the burglars.

THE most prominent lady in the social world of Paris in those days—after the Empress, of course—was Princess Pauline Metternich. She was a Sandor, and married her uncle, Prince Richard Metternich. She was hideously ugly—yellow skin, pop eyes, thick lips (she called herself the "Singe à la Mode," and the name was appropriate and stuck to her), looking somewhat like a white "Topsy"—but very clever and with the audacity of Old Nick himself. She had, like the Empress, that really rare gift—for it is a *gift*—like poetry, music, cooking, and, like them, cannot be acquired—the "sentiment de la toilette" to a degree approaching

genius, and could wear the most amazing dresses, both as regards material, make, and colouring—so exquisitely put together (of course, I have to write clumsily and like a mere man, no doubt not using the proper epithets; as Coleridge said of Southey's *Life of Nelson* that his wary and careful use of nautical terms reminded him of a cat on a shelf full of priceless china), so grouped that the effect was always charming. She generally wore quiet colours, but I have seen her in marvellous vestments, once in a dress of yellow, red and blue of the most glaring shades, and yet the whole harmonized most admirably. It was, of course, she who discovered, at Gagelins in the Rue de Richelieu, that young Englishman from Lincolnshire, Worth, and soon recognizing in him a fellow genius, took him up and made his fortune. Imagine a mere youth from the Fen country becoming, thanks to his lucky meeting with the Austrian Ambassadrice, the High Priest of ladies' dress in the capital of Fashion! "Grande Dame," as she was, of course, to her finger tips—how could it be otherwise with such blood in her veins? "Grande Dame" she always remained. It sometimes amused her, not only to pretend to be *canaille* (I have heard her use the vilest slang of the *voyou*), but to choose her playmates from among the "Plebs." She smiled on Baür, the young Jew from Madrid, who entered the Roman Catholic Church—as he himself afterwards admitted when he left it—purely and simply in order to be able to indulge *ad lib.* in just such smiles and from as

many different ladies' lips as possible (but of him more later)—and on others. She sent for Thérèsa to teach her how to sing her songs, "La Femme a Barbe" and the rest, and use the vile gestures that she, Thérèsa, used, and, eventually did the whole thing better than Thérèsa. She did, in fact, all kinds of funny things that would have hopelessly polluted most women no matter of what rank, but Pauline Metternich—yellow skin, pop eyes, thick lips and all, remained always and forever and through it all *grande dame quand même.* I have only known two other similar instances of the utter inability of mere mud really to soil (as Guizot so delightfully said to the man who was rude: "Your insolence can never hope to rise to the height of my disdain!") one a man, my friend, the late Duke of Hamilton, and the other a lady, the late Queen Isabella of Spain—grandmother of the present King. Of course, when I knew Isabella II she was old and living in the Pavillon de Castille, near the Arc de Triomphe (my father knew her in Madrid when she was on the throne), and she looked like some old charwoman, in fact, worse, because she was covered with an awful skin disease. Her morals were always even more scrofulous than her face; but what an "Augusta" that fat, old Messalina Betsy Prig was all the same! What charm of manner! What delightful tricks of gesture! What refinement positively shouting to you for recognition from the poor old wrinkled face that no number of toreadors' kisses had been able to reduce to base-

ness! Of course, it is quite on the cards that in any circumstances Isabella might have stooped to folly (she, alas! learnt too late that Prim betrayed); but very certain it is that her bonnet was deliberately thrown over the mill for her by our Foreign Office. Everyone (in Diplomacy at least) knows the true story. Louis Philippe wanted the young Queen of Spain for his youngest son, the Duc de Montpensier. We were averse from that: the situation became very strained. It suddenly occurred to the Quai d'Orsay to be very clever (always, by the way, a mistake). Secret inquiries were made to ascertain if England would object to the Duc de Montpensier marrying the only sister of the Queen, instead of the Queen herself. If not, Louis Philippe might possibly be induced to make this concession, but solely and only on the distinct understanding that the young Queen should marry her cousin, Don François d'Assisi, not otherwise. Now the Quai d'Orsay happened to learn that this young Prince had very peculiar views, similar views to those entertained by Frederick the Great, the Chancellor Cambacerès and others; that, therefore, no children would result from his marriage with the Queen; and so, in the course of time, the Crown would come to her sister, Christina, and thus Montpensier would, after all, only have to wait. No: we would not object: if Montpensier would content himself with Christina, we would gladly pledge ourselves that the Queen should marry Don François and no other. So that was agreed and the two mar-

riages took place. Oh! the artfulness of it all! We, too, knew the views of Don François; but our Foreign Secretary knew women better than the Frenchman did; and he felt perfectly confident that ere long, if Don François persisted in gazing at bull fighters instead of looking at his wife, the young Queen would very naturally be looking in that direction too, if haply she might ascertain what in the world her husband could find in them so to absorb his attention. The result was inevitable; and *the letter is still extant in which Downing Street congratulates our Ambassador in Paris on the news of Isabella taking a lover.* Think of this Louis Quinze-like intrigue taking place in the virtuous days when the spotless hands of Victorian Joan and Darby Albert were busily engaged laying foundation stones and opening institutes! How true is Disraeli's remark that there is no honour in politics! By the way, can it be that Harrow breeds lads of lax views regarding ladies? There are Byron and Sheridan, but here, worst of all, is Palmerston!

Of course, when Isabella had thus begun she went the whole course: became an absolute stayer; no obstacle daunted her; she flew over the sticks with ever-increasing zest and agility. But the late King Alfonso was not the result of the first flight of hurdles negotiated by his mother: he was the reward of a subsequent jump—when the Queen took (one can hardly say at one bound, but still very certainly took—got over) a young American

dentist's assistant named McKeon, a lad who very gladly put aside extracting and stopping in his master's surgery for other duties at the Royal Palace. The different fathers of Isabella's children were always perfectly well known at the Escurial—Serrano, Prim, and so on—Don Legion in fact; indeed even persons like Marfori and countless other flashes in the pan. There was never the least secret about it at the Spanish Court, and that the young American dentist, McKeon, was the father of the late King is as undeniable an historical fact as it is that the late King was the father of the present one. Queen Isabella took complete possession of McKeon and kept him closely with her for a long time to the exclusion of all others for more than a year, and then the son was born. Of course, Don François didn't care; bull fighters galore, common soldiers, dentists' assistants, they might come and go as his consort listed. He had other cares of State: other public duties to attend to, other fish to fry in fact.

I have spoken of Baür. He was of the family of the Jewish bankers of that name who represent the house of Rothschild in Madrid. As a youth it struck him that if he got baptized and joined the Roman Catholic Church he might have any amount of fun, for he was well aware that—to reverse the well-known lines—wearers of the *soutane* (especially if they be young and stalwart and enterprising) or otherwise angels, can rush in, where laymen

—because of possible duels and divorce proceedings —fear to tread. So very much with his tongue in his cheek young Baür—with, as it were, an "au revoir" wink to the Rabbis—became a Monsignor. When this rich, clever, stalwart Jew boy (for he was only a lad) came to Paris all the ladies at the Tuileries, all the actresses, all the demi-mondaines, went mad over him. He was passed from arms to arms, from lips to lips. But Baür revelled in it, and probably no one man in modern society has ever had such close, tumultuous, intimacy with the consciences of beautiful women as he had. It was so delightful, so new, so unexpected to have a rich young Abbé to confess all your sins to; it was almost worth while confessing imaginary sins to obtain his delightful advice and forgiveness! And then when you had said everything, put all your sins—your temptations, before him, how kind, how comforting this experienced young spiritual guide was! He knew all about it: he had been tempted and fallen himself, so he knew just how and where to soothe, and console and heal; and his absolution (especially in such cases as required special pleading, special conflict, and struggling; special unction of grace) was invariably followed by some handsome present—a bracelet, earrings or what not. Surely an ideal Samaritan. He was a reincarnation of the *Talons rouges;* of the *petits Abbés* of the old days. Not only Madame de Metternich but everyone took possession of him. He was made Almoner to the Empress; and when Her Majesty went to open

the Suez Canal just made by her cousin, Lesseps, Baür, as her Aumonier, went with her, and it was he, this profligate Jew mountebank, who blessed it! When the Empire fell, Baür rang down the curtain of the farce of his youth; discarded the *soutane,* and returned to the Synagogue. When I first met him to speak to (for, of course, I had known him by sight when a child) it was years later, and at a dinner party given in his honour by an English lady in her beautiful little house in the Rue Jean Goujon—Mrs. Lloyd, daughter of Gordon, the Spanish wine shipper, and sister of the Prince of Orange's jackal, and fidus Achates. Baür was old then, but still very amusing, and he came with his *two wives* (as he called them, both pretty women), for, as he explained, he could not get on with less, and he knew Mrs. Lloyd was very broadminded, charitable and forgiving! It was funny to think this old Jew roué had blessed, in the name of the Trinity, the Suez Canal in the far-distant past. When the dear Empress (against whose honour, I hope I need hardly say, in every sense of the word there was never a breath of scandal whispered, centre though she was of a very vicious circle) heard of the return of Baür to Judaism and of his cynical avowal of the cause of his canter into Christianity and what a delightful and successful trip it had been, she said to Madame de Mouchy, who told me, "Quel misérable! And to think I let that scoundrel bless the Canal. It's enough to bring a curse on every

ship that goes through it!" Her Majesty was very superstitious.

Now of the Empress I have something to say which is, perhaps, of historical value, and as I heard it direct from the lips of Lord Lyons it may be relied on, so far as it goes. There are, by the way, no doubt, very many persons still living who enjoyed the friendship of this very genial old bachelor; and as what I have to relate was not, of course, imparted as a secret, what I say can probably be easily confirmed. Briefly it is as follows:

When the Empress died not long ago there was a great question both in the French Press and in our own, as to how far she was personally responsible for the terrible war that brought about the disasters of 1870. It is, of course, a well-known fact that some months before the incident of Ems, where the insolence of Benedetti threw all the fat into the fire, Mme. de Pourtalès (the divinely beautiful and graceful Melanie de Bussière) had, on her return from her country seat in Alsace, rushed to the Tuileries in great terror and told her friend the Empress that to her certain knowledge Prussia was firmly decided on war at any price, and no matter what diplomatic concessions might be made in the question of the Spanish Throne, and were not only firmly decided on war but were fully prepared for it. That such revelations were made to the Empress by Mme. de Pourtalès is a matter of history and has never been disputed (I have myself heard the facts from the lips of Mme. de Pourtalès

more than once in her beautiful house in the Rue Tronchet), but on the death of the Empress many persons denied that Her Majesty had ever used personal influence with her husband to precipitate the catastrophe, or that she had ever called it "Ma Guerre," as used to be said. I cannot positively say, of course, that she ever did call it "My War," although I have rather good reason to believe she did, but the following facts related to me by Lord Lyons are significant; and taken in conjunction with the undisputed facts of the revelations made to her by Mme. de Pourtalès, not without interest. The Rothschilds, as is known, never openly rallied to the Second Empire: they were never hostile; but were never among the intimates of the Tuileries, and so never had the latest and most reliable news from Headquarters. Now Baron Alphonse de Rothschild (who himself told this to Lord Lyons) being anxious to know exactly how matters stood and what were the chances of an amicable arrangement with Prussia, decided to go himself to the Emperor direct and ask him. The Court was at that time at St. Cloud, and as the Baron knew His Majesty held his Councils of State very early in the morning—*à l'aube* as it were, for the Emperor suffered such pain in his bladder that he could hardly sleep—he started at four from the Rue St. Florentin, being wishful, if he could, to see His Majesty before the Council was held. The Emperor received him at once; the Council had not been held; the Emperor quite understood, of course,

the natural anxiety of Baron Alphonse to know exactly *sur quoi se tenir;* and taking his hand in his, His Majesty said very earnestly," C'est ne pas la guerre, my dear Baron, *foi de gentilhomme* (a favourite expression of His Majesty, by the way) it is *not* war." Of course, the Baron was greatly relieved and delighted, and after a few words of thanks and congratulations took his departure. But in the corridor leading to the Emperor's private rooms he met the Empress going to see her husband. Of course he stopped and had a few words with Her Majesty, but only on ordinary and trivial topics; and then, bowing low, rushed to his carriage and was driven post haste to his Bank in the Rue Lafitte, the Empress proceeding to the Emperor's room. The Baron had not been back two hours when an estafette, his horse reeking, as he had galloped all the way from St. Cloud, dashed up to the Bank with the laconic message—the words written in pencil to save time—" Tout est changé; C'est la guerre.—N." Such are the facts. Of course, they do not absolutely prove that the Empress used her influence to change the mind of Napoleon III which before her visit to him had been decided on peace (although Alphonse de Rothschild always thought she did), but they are, to say the least, somewhat significant. The truth is, that knowing her husband's life to be in grave danger through the disease he was suffering from, and being fully conscious of her own very great mental ability, Her Majesty desired to become, on the death of her Consort, a

second Catherine of Russia till at least the majority of her son, who, by the way, was always led by her during the entire course of his short life. And about the Prince Imperial I may as well tell here the little I knew personally about him. I went (with Miss Mamie Paine, an American girl who afterwards married Ferdinand Bischoffscheim) to the only children's party that he ever gave at the Tuileries: I met him every now and then at the house of the Gallifets, Pourtalès, and others; but the last time I saw him to speak to was at a garden party given at beautiful Knole by the Buckhursts. I went down with the late Lord John Manners (afterwards Duke of Rutland) and the Prince came over from Chislehurst with young Conneau. He was always timid and nervous and unassuming, and hated being made a fuss of ("car apres tout je ne suis personne en Angleterre," as he said to Lady Molesworth once); and I shall never forget how uncomfortable he looked when first Lord John and I came across him in one of the innumerable beautiful rooms of that most beautiful of houses. Lady Buckhurst (the handsome Conti) was giving him tea, and treating him like a Prince of the Blood, while the poor Prince stood there bowing, of course, in response to his hostess's obeisances, but nervously tapping with his stick the side of his boot, and evidently wishing there was less formality. He told me himself later on, when I had a few words with him, that such big gatherings bored him to death; but I do not think he carried away

with him an altogether disagreeable recollection of that garden party, for I saw him later on laughing and evidently enjoying himself immensely with the very beautiful Duchess of Westminster (Constance) who was treating him with so little ceremony that she was putting strawberries into his mouth with her own fair fingers. "Lucky beggar!" as Lord John truly remarked. The Prince Imperial went to Zululand for two reasons: first because he was bored to death at Chislehurst; and secondly because he was so fond of his friend "Kaygy" Slade that he could not live without him, and was always begging his mother to let him go out to South Africa and join his friend. In fact, he became, it appears, an absolute nuisance at home. One Sunday afternoon, in Paris, I was going myself to post some letters in the Rue Montaigne, to be sure of their being in time to be received in London first delivery, when I was overtaken by the Duc de Montmorency, whom I knew had only just got back from Chislehurst, and I said to him: "I can't imagine how the Empress can possibly have allowed the Prince Imperial to go to that ungodly hole where his life must be in danger every day fighting savages—a ridiculous exploit for anyone with such a name as his!" "*Allowed* him to go!" echoed Montmorency, laughing. "That shows how much you know about the affairs at Camden Place. Why he *insisted* on going, made the life of his mother a perfect nuisance; all day and every day he was harping on it. So she had

to give way at last. The trip will do him good; open his mind; and the influence of his friend Slade on him is very good. As for danger, there's not the slightest. They'll all look after him, Harrison, Lord Downe, Slade, everyone—and the niggers will never get near him." Little did Montmorency and I know that at that very moment when we were chatting in this way, at the Rond Point the young Prince was lying dead—killed a few hours before!

Montmorency, by the way, owed his title to the Empress. He was brother of the Prince de Sagan (Boson, he of the broad black-ribboned monocle—the white moustache, the innumerable conquests of hearts, and equally innumerable clever sayings) and was one of the few members of the old régime who rallied to the Court of the Second Empire, for which the Empress had Adalbert de Talleyrand-Périgord created Duc de Montmorency. This so enraged Stanislas de la Rochefoucauld (the Duc de Doudeauville) that he came up on purpose from his lovely place, La Gaudiniere, near Vendôme, to slap Adalbert's face! A bloodless duel was the result. But Adalbert had no luck, for when he went to his father for consolation, the old man would not even shake hands with him, and coldly remarked in reply to Adalbert's explanations, " Sir, when one has the honour to bear a name like ours, one does not change it!" As for Stanislas de la Rochefoucauld's assertions that he had no right to the name of Montmorency, that, as Adalbert truly said was nonsense; " for one is always sure of one's

mother, if not quite so certain about one's father!" He married Carmen Aguado— Waldteufel composed his famous waltz "Carmen" for her—sister of the very magnificent Olympe of that ilk, Spanish bankers, and lived in a house belonging to the Empress in the Rue de l'Elysée, two doors from that of the Comtesse Eugene de Mercy Argenteau, and only a few doors from that of Mme. Mitjans, mother of Duc Santoña, of both which ladies I shall have something to chronicle later. Mouchy lived at the extreme end, the Avenue Gabriel end, of this street—(the Empress owned the whole street—old Hirsch had the house later) and of this extraordinary individual I will say a few words here.

Antoine de Noailles, Duc de Mouchy, very clever, very rich, and when young (I only knew him when he had passed his prime) very good-looking, was also one of the few members of the old noblesse of France to join the Court of the Second Empire. He was, no doubt, a madman, a youthful Heliogabalus. His exploits are absolutely unfit for publication. He used to roam the streets of Paris acting in the vilest way, and when arrested, would always ask to be taken to the Tuileries, to the Emperor, instead of to the Police Station, and the Emperor would always order his release. This went on for a very long time till it became a public scandal, and so, one night, when "Tony" had—dare I chronicle it?—been surpassing himself in mad folly, had been dancing before the soldiers in the Pepiniere Barracks with no covering, save the

castagnettes on his hands, and as usual, at his request, had been brought to the Emperor instead of to the lock-up, His Majesty told him plainly he should let the law take its course unless he, Mouchy, promised him, then and there, to get married at once and marry the lady he, the Emperor, would choose for him. The young Duc, frightened at the idea of prison and scandal, ruefully promised; and, not long after, this very reluctant bridegroom led to the altar one of the most beautiful ladies of the Court—Princess Anna Murat! All the Murats are handsome—for beauty runs in families abroad just as it does at home—the Hamiltons, Dawneys, Herberts, etc., but Anna was the handsomest of all. They had two children, both now dead: Sabine de Noailles, who died in girlhood; and a very nice boy, the Prince de Poix, who married a daughter of the Vicomtesse de Courval—an American. Apart from his vile and monstrous eccentricities, Mouchy was a very pleasant fellow. Although naturally abhorring his views and vices, the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) was fond of Tony and of his beautiful Duchess. He saw much of them both during many years in Paris, and stayed at their country seat at Mouchy; in fact it was from his late Majesty's lips that I first heard of Tony's death. The King stopped me in Pall Mall, right by Wilkinson's, and said: "Do you know poor Mouchy is dead?" and looked very sad. But among his many qualities Tony was not conspicuous for courage. He lived as I have said in

the big house at the corner of the Avenue Gabriel and Rue de l'Elysée (afterwards inhabited by old Hirsch), and one night he awoke to find two masked housebreakers in his bedroom. "Please don't touch me," called out Tony. "I've got nothing. But I'll show you where all the Duchess's jewels are with pleasure, if you'll promise not to hurt me." This unexpected coöperation was, of course, gratefully accepted, and when the Duke had given them all of his wife's splendid jewels he offered them drinks which they accepted, and then they unmasked: "And," exclaimed Tony enthusiastically, in recounting this episode to the Marquis de Contades, "you've no idea, *mon cher,* what good-looking burglars they were!"

CHAPTER VI

Tragedy of the Mexican Empire. Most of those connected with it personal friends of ours. Strange coincidence. Why Maximilian went to Mexico. Comte Bombelles. The murder. The Empress Charlotte. Strange and terrible story told by her Chamberlain Mora partly corroborated. The late Duke of Cambridge and Queen Victoria hoodwinked by Leopold II. Bazaine the Arch Traitor. The reason why his second wife committed suicide. Bombelles, equerry to ill-fated Crown Prince of Austria. Visits by Prince to Paris *incog.* My friendship with his Uncle and Aunt, the ex-King and Queen of Naples. Eccentricities of the Queen. Paul Potter. Charles Yriarte. Gustave de Rothschild. The blow on his head. The two Greuzes of Mlle. Maison. Baron Adolphe de Rothschild. Why he could not buy the pictures. "Be careful of Dudley." Turquet. Lady Mary Craven's rocking horse. My ride. Amazement of Minister. "You English are all mad." Funny story about Lady Mary Craven, her father and King Edward.

TO return for the nonce to Second Empire days, if the Empress was innocent of the Franco-Prussian War, she greatly influenced the Mexican expedition. That despicable villain Bazaine was her special protégé (just as the arch traitor Trochu was later) and, as I have said, the great friend of her mother and herself. José Hidalgo, was the first (and only) Ambassador sent by Maximilian to France. It so happened that we knew personally, and very well, almost all the persons connected with this tragic episode

with the exception of Maximilian himself and his Consort, and the two traitors, Lopez and Von Becker. And in connection with this fact here is an odd coincidence. I had just been reading the Memoirs of the Princess Felix Salm Salm (an American who tried to save the doomed Emperor) and on closing the book I said to my mother, "How odd that we should have known everyone connected with that tragedy (including Mme. Salm Salm) except the Emperor and Empress themselves and the two traitors!" and that very evening, while sitting on the floor playing patience with two pretty English girls at the house of some Brazilians, the door opened and the butler announced: "M. Valdemar Von Becker." So here I had all the collection of puppets complete; for Lopez was dead. Comte Bombelles the Austrian, Baron Maguns the German, Blondel the Belgian, Monthholon the French Ambassador, and Mora the Chamberlain of the Empress Charlotte, were all most intimate friends of ours and gave us many details of this terrible business. Maximilian (who, by the way, wore his hair brushed back and fastened by a comb like a little girl) was glad to get away from Vienna where he was in disgrace for having slapped the Emperor Francis Joseph's face in open Court, and would have accepted any mission taking him away from Austria. Bombelles told us poor Maximilian always had a feeling that he would never return alive to Europe, and said: "Tant mieux, je m'en fiche!" He was shot in the clothes of his

French valet (Bombelles tied the handkerchief over his eyes and I have had it in my hands) and they were so clumsy about it that the poor Prince rolled about the ground in agony, trying to tear the buttons off the waistcoat before a half-caste came and gave the *coup de grâce*. Everyone seemed to have deserted him, Napoleon III, the Emperor of Austria—everyone. His wife, poor Charlotte, had gone to Europe to plead for help for him, but everyone turned a deaf ear, and when she got to her own Court, Brussels, she was detained as a lunatic for the rest of her life. Mora, her Chamberlain, always solemnly assured us that she was not at all insane when first confined as such, nor indeed for many years later, till, in fact, driven to insanity by her treatment. She was the greatest heiress in Europe; Leopold II was her heir. That was Mora's solution; and he begged us to notice (as we did, and he was right) that whenever the papers announced that Queen Victoria (to whom the Duke of Cambridge had said something on this subject, thereby arousing Her Majesty's suspicions) was coming to the Continent to Cimiez or elsewhere—the papers the next day would announce that the Empress Charlotte had entered into so violent a stage of madness that it rendered it impossible for anyone, even her own relatives, to visit her at Laeken. Leopold II was afraid Queen Victoria would discover his hideous crime. That Mora told the Duke of Cambridge I know, for I have seen letters; and that this strange coincidence of

Queen Victoria's visits to the Continent and the sudden violent phase of insanity in the poor Empress's condition rendering any visit to her impossible, according to the papers, synchronized year after year is also a fact; a glance at back files of old newspapers will prove it.

It was due to Bazaine's desertion that Maximilian became a victim, but the fat stumpy scoundrel, who afterwards betrayed his country to Germany, was mixed up in another tragedy that is little known, but which I will chronicle.

Not long before going to Mexico, Bazaine had married a young wife whom he left in Paris. During his absence his wife fell in love with a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, and became his mistress, and wrote him several very compromising letters. It so happened that this same gentleman had been the lover of a well-known Jewish actress, Judith, who used to act (I have seen her in it) as Hamlet in that ridiculous version in verse by Dumas with a happy ending—Hamlet, only wounded after his duel with Laertes, staggering to the throne, seating himself on it and a prophetic blessing coming to him: "You shall reign happily and for years over Denmark," or some such rubbish (I forget exactly the words)—and Judith, being madly jealous, bribed a servant, got the compromising letters and sent them on to Mexico to Bazaine. When poor Madame Bazaine heard this she rushed to the Tuileries; the Emperor kindly intervened, and sent a special gunboat out to Mexico to inter-

cept the mail and restore the letters. But it was too late; and poor Madame Bazaine, knowing she could expect no mercy from the bombastic, podgy little ruffian who was as cruel to women as he was treacherous to his country, took poison.

Bombelles, who was very much attached to Maximilian and who said he died with the calm courage of the true Christian and gentleman he was, afterwards became Governor of the ill-fated Crown Prince of Austria, and his account of some of the educational methods adopted for the instruction of the Heir Apparent of the Austro-Hungarian throne was amusing. For example, the poor Prince would be hastily awakened in the dead of night when fast asleep to be asked abruptly some trivial fact in history. "Please give the exact date of the Peace of Utrecht!" or "How old was Charles V when he died?" The young Crown Prince (whom I never met to speak to but often saw and heard a good deal about from Bombelles) was, it appears, a most charming lad, and devoted to his mother, but very dissipated; and, having Wittelsbach blood in his veins, was as mad as a hatter. It used to amuse the young Prince to come every now and then to Paris quite *incog.* with Bombelles and another member of his suite, whose name I don't remember; and he would insist on living not only as an ordinary commoner, but as a working man or rather tradesman, taking cheap rooms in the St. Lazare quarter, eating at the Bouillon, Duval, and going about in buses. Of course, dur-

ing those visits Bombelles had to come to see us quite secretly, and only when his Imperial Master happened to have gone out with the other noblemen in attendance; but the Prince was recognized once by one of our friends who had been attached to our Embassy in Vienna and whose attention was drawn to the odd fact of two middle-aged and distinguished-looking men (one of whom he recognized as Bombelles) making way for a young man, whose face at first he could not see, to clamber up to the top of an omnibus before them. This thoughtless lapse into respect gave the show away.

His uncle and aunt, the ex-King and Queen of Naples, I knew very well, and made their acquaintance in rather a curious manner, to say the least of it. A former stable boy of mine, Reilly, became their coachman, and when it came to their knowledge that I had a splendid mare, Rosebud, I was willing to sell, knowing his Royal mistress was in search of just such an animal, he came to me. Negotiations were opened and completed to the satisfaction of all, and I became a constant visitor to this strange Royal Couple who insisted on living always in an hotel, the Hôtel Vouillemont in the Rue Boissy d'Anglais, a stone's throw from the Place de la Concorde. She, being a Wittelsbach, was equally, of course, very eccentric, to say the least of it, and one of her hobbies (not generally known) was to hire the Hippodrome for a few hours some afternoon; go up there with only a maid and her husband, the King, and Reilly, dress as a circus

rider—short skirts and all—and gallop round the ring, sitting down and standing up on a bare-backed horse, and jumping through paper hoops held up for her by the King and by Reilly! One morning I met King Francis walking in the Champs Elysées, and he came up to me at once and told me he was glad to meet me alone for he knew he could trust me, and wanted to know if I could help him in a private matter requiring the utmost discretion and prudence. He had a picture to sell, one of the most beautiful ever painted by Paul Potter (and that great genius did not live to paint many, for he died at 21—by the way, one of his masterpieces is always cited as the fourth greatest painting in the world, "Le Taureau qui pisse"), but on no account must it transpire that it belonged to him; and so no dealers must be approached. I refused at first (I need, I hope, hardly say that this was not in any sense a business transaction, and there was never any question of commission or profit for me attached to it) because I pointed out to His ex-Majesty that everything ever painted by Paul Potter and everything about each painting was well-known and contained in the thin volume of engravings: "L'Oeuvre de Paul Potter" at the National Library—or, in fact, to be found anywhere; so that to hope to hide the identity of the real owner was vain. The King admitted this was true, but said: "Only offer it to someone whose honour you can trust; then if he likes it, and is ready to buy, you can tell him the owner's name on his promise to

keep the secret." As poor "Cecco" seemed really anxious, I at length consented to do my best, but told His Majesty that as I did not pretend to know one picture from another, I must be free to consult my very intimate friend, Charles Yriarte, and the King gave me leave to do so. I took a room in the Chaussée d'Antin (nearly opposite the stage entrance of the Vaudeville Theatre), one bare room on the third floor, and when the picture was there I went to Charles Yriarte in the Rue Taitbout and begged him to come, as a friend, to see a Paul Potter I wanted to sell secretly for a friend. He came at once, and when he saw the picture fell on his knees before it. It was certainly a most marvellous painting and very big for a Paul Potter, and I remember, by the way, there was a fly on the back of one of the cows, the exquisite execution of which was plainly seen by the use of a magnifying glass. Yriarte went into ecstasies over the painting, and nobody knew more about pictures than he (Richard Wallace never bought a painting of importance for his father, Lord Hertford, without first submitting it to Yriarte) but, oddly enough, evidently did not know to whom it belonged, for he asked me; and I told him I could only divulge the name to a purchaser. "Well," he said, "it is certainly very beautiful; anyone would jump at it. Why not write to the National Gallery in London? They have no Paul Potter." Then he paused and said: "You know Gustave de Rothschild very well, don't you?" "Yes." "Well, he's the man—he'll jump

at it; and as he's a thorough gentleman, he'll keep any secret about the owner." I wrote that night to the National Gallery, and called the following day in the Rue Lafitte where I found, as usual, all the brothers—Alphonse, Gustave, Edmond—sitting in the same long room but in different compartments, as it were, so that one could speak quite confidentially to any one of them. I was met by the usual and well-known Rothschild greeting: "Well, what can I do for you?" from Alphonse, and after a word with him about nothing in particular, found my way to Gustave, to whom I told the whole story of the picture, and that the name of the owner must remain a secret till the last moment. "Paul Potter, indeed!" exclaimed the Baron, "and Charles Yriarte says one of the very best! Come and see it? Indeed, I will with pleasure; when? at once?" I couldn't manage that day, and an appointment was made for him to meet me the following morning at 11.30 at the door of the house in the Chaussée d'Antin, where in the bare room on the third floor I had for the time being lodged the picture. I was, of course, punctual on the morrow, but Baron Gustave oddly enough for once in his life was not, and I got rather tired of waiting in the porte cochère. Suddenly I saw Blanche Pierson drive up to the stage door opposite (they were rehearsing a play by Sardou) and go in. As I wanted to see that most charming of women and daintiest of artists I left my post and went across to the theatre and upstairs. I stayed there longer than I intended

(but as I had Blanche Pierson and Bartet and Réjane to chat with that may be understood); and, indeed, I thought the Baron had been detained and would write to me and make another appointment to see the picture; but on leaving the theatre I went back to find out if by chance anything had happened, and found the concierge (a very pretty woman, by the way) in a great state of excitement. Yes, the gentleman had called—tall, thin gentleman with a beard. He had seemed surprised not to find me, but went up with her and saw the picture. He seemed very much excited in some way; got down on his knees on the floor to see it better: "and oh! Monsieur, then a dreadful thing happened! I thought he wanted better light, so as he was kneeling down with his hat in his hand I lifted up the curtains of the window, but the bar that held the curtain gave way, and fell down right on the poor gentleman's bald head!" "Good God!" I exclaimed. "What did he say?" "*Le pauvre monsieur* said nothing, but got up from his knees and asked me to tell you he'd called; thanked me for showing him the picture and told me to ask you to call on him!" I rushed round to the Rue Lafitte at once. Think of dear old Baron Gustave having a bruised pate just because I could not wait for him a few minutes, but chose to run across the street like an ass and waste my time chattering with a lot of actresses! When Gustave, seated of course in his usual place, saw me, he smiled and shook his head sadly as I

approached, and before I could offer a word of apology said: "No, I can't buy it! It's impossible!" This so surprised me that I forgot all about the apology. "Why not, Baron? isn't it authentic?" "Of course, it's authentic—a blind man could see that—it's Potter all over." "Isn't it a fine picture?" "One of the very finest he ever painted—a marvellous picture, in fact!" "Why then not buy it?" He shook his head and smiled. "That's absolutely impossible, *mon cher enfant,* and for the simple reason that I happen to know to whom it belongs. You need not tell me, for I know it." "Well, and what of that?" I exclaimed. "You know what a nice man he is. Do listen to your kind heart, my dear Baron, and buy it. He is really hard up and you'd be doing an act of kindness and . . . " Baron Gustave held up his hand, shook his head again and said: "That's the very reason: everyone would say I took advantage of his straitened circumstances, no matter what I might pay him for it. *Le monde est si bête!* No," and the Baron rose, smiled and gave me his hand, "It's absolutely out of the question, although I am more sorry than your friend will be that I can't say yes. It's absolutely impossible. I am very sorry. And now you must go, *mon enfant,* for I am very busy this morning, and that pretty little concierge of yours banged me over the head with an iron bar, so I need absolute rest to write my letters!" So with a kind, chaffing smile he dismissed me. A day or two later I got a letter from the

National Gallery. They wanted a Paul Potter, but said they had got no money! So I sent the picture back to Cecco and told him what had happened, and that I could do no more.

Oddly enough, the only other time I ever endeavoured to dispose of a picture for a friend in need had an equally comical incident attached to it, and another member of that most charming family of Rothschild was connected with it. Poor old Mademoiselle Maison, daughter of the Marshal of France of that name, was very hard up and asked me if I knew anyone who would buy her two beautiful pictures by Greuze, both the same subject, Mary Magdalen in the desert, but one a fair Magdalen and one a dark one, very beautiful pictures and well-known. So I wrote to Lord Dudley (father of the present Peer), an old friend of mine, and I also wrote to Adolphe de Rothschild, the Geneva man, whose splendid palace, flanked by his marvellous gallery of works of art in the Rue de Monceau, was very familiar to me. Baron Adolphe (both his daughters married Christians, one the Prince de Wagram and the other the young Duc de Gramont, son of the Armand Duval, Prince de Bidache, I have already spoken of) was not at all friendly with his cousins, the other Rothschilds in Paris, and used to ask me sometimes half in jest: "What has that wretched Alphonse been saying about me lately?" or "What has that fool Gustave been doing?" and so on. At that time I was living very high up—third floor over

entresol—in a very delightful hotel kept by an ex-courier of the Queen of Portugal, off the Rond Point, and coming down stairs early, the morning after posting my letter to Adolphe, to take my usual canter in the Bois, I heard, as I went down, someone very laboriously and slowly coming up, panting and pausing, and making growling remarks, such as "What the devil did he mean by writing to me when he lives in an attic? Does he think I'm a lad of twenty, with legs like a monkey?" Then we met face to face. It was the Baron! I was, naturally, of course, at once most effusive in apologies, although I had not asked him nor expected him to call. "But," I said finally, "it's not necessary to go up another step, my dear Baron, for I have not got the pictures here, but I can tell you all about them where we stand." So I did, but when I told him whose they were he held up his hands in horror. "Miséricorde! I know them! They're beautiful pictures. I can't buy them! I wish I could, but I can't. And here, I've nearly broken my back for nothing!" "Why can't you buy them?" I asked. And this was the amazing reply: "Because they are nude figures, and the Baroness won't allow me to have another nude woman in my collection." When I told him I had written to Lord Dudley, he said: "Yes, you were right. He won't mind the nudity, but take good care of poor old Mademoiselle Maison, for if you don't look out, Dudley will be paying her in coal instead of cash, and I don't suppose she wants a few thousand

pounds' worth of coal dumped down in front of her house!" So it was no deal with old Adolphe although we parted good friends, and he was kind enough to say the Baronne often asked about me, and that I must come and see them soon. But that was not the comic incident. That did not take place till nearly a month later, when, indeed, I had given up all thought of the pictures, as Lord Dudley's secretary wrote he was somewhere abroad and not expected back in England for some time. The rooms I had in the hotel were, although so high up, very large and comfortable; and that very beautiful lady, Lady Mary Craven (what a lovely bust Carrier Belleuse did of her!) whose daughter, had she lived, would have been Duchess of Richmond, had asked me to take charge, during her short absence at Spa, of a very large, life-sized rocking horse belonging to one of her children. It was an enormous toy, the size of a charger, and the swing on it was delicious. I had it put in my salon, and very often after my bath I would, without dressing at all, get into the saddle, put my bare feet into the stirrups and have a swing, the slow long dip in front and the long roll back being very pleasant. One morning I was thus engaged, riding the enormous rocking horse absolutely without clothing and with a cigarette in my mouth, when someone knocked at the door, and thinking, naturally, it could be merely a servant or tradesman at that hour I cried: "Entrez!" The door opened and a short man with grey pointed beard, wearing glasses, dressed in a

grey suit, alpine hat, and smoking a meerschaum pipe, stood in the doorway. He was about to speak, but on seeing me naked astride of a gigantic rocking horse and going to and fro with long sweeping swings, he paused speechless as if paralysed. The sight of the man's pipe annoyed me. "Who the devil are you, and what do you mean coming here with that beastly pipe?" I asked, for the man's silence was irritating. For another moment he remained silent, removing his pipe from his mouth, and looking fixedly at me as at some strange monster as I plunged more and more in my mad wooden career, and then the whole thing became too much for him and he burst out laughing, doubling himself up, smacking his thigh with his hand and positively shrieking! "Oh, you English, you English! All mad, all, everyone of you; mad, mad, mad!" "Who the devil are you, you insolent beggar," I replied. "Are you drunk? How did the servants let you up? What are you doing here? Tell me at once, or I'll ring the bell and have you carted off by the police!" The man, still writhing and yelling with laughter, put his hand in his waistcoat pocket, took out a card and held it out. "Damn your card!" I cried, "you don't suppose I'm going to take the trouble to dismount to read it. Who are you? Can't you speak?" But no, he could not. He shook his head—he was speechless—and advancing a few steps into the room put his card on the table. Something in the man's manner, his sublime cheek, so to speak, suddenly appealed to me, and

jumping off the rocking horse I strode to the table and read: "M. Turquet, Ministre des Beaux Arts!" I was pulverised. "Oh, Excellence," I said, "please forgive me! How could I know? How could I think? But do let me just get on a pair of pants and then I will be able to plead for forgiveness with greater decency." He was still speechless with laughter, but waved his hand and sat down, while I rushed into the bedroom and got into some kind of covering as soon as I could, and then came back and made peace. He was a very nice, jovial old gentleman. He got my letter: could not attend to it at once, but came unannounced when he could—with the above result. I sent him on to Mademoiselle Maison's, but I never heard what came of it. But can any situation be more terrible! Fancy one of our Ministers, say George Curzon, coming in suddenly on a young man seated naked on a rocking horse! What would happen?

Speaking of beautiful Lady Mary Craven, there was an amusing story current connected with her before her marriage, and when, indeed, she was but a very young girl. The Prince of Wales wrote her a very charming and affectionate letter, calling her "Mary" *tout court,* saying he was coming to tea with her on such and such an afternoon, and hoped she would be alone so that they could have a nice little *tête-à-tête* chat. This missive somehow got into the hands of her father, Lord Hardwicke. He said nothing, but when the day and hour for the tea arrived and the Prince came hoping to find

"dear Mary" alone, he found the old Earl in full uniform of admiral, cocked hat in hand, ready to receive him at the top of the red carpeted steps leading from the street, and to conduct him to the tea-table, where, indeed, was "dear Mary," but no chance of a *tête-à-tête*. The Prince in after years often told this story himself with great glee, so it is certainly true.

CHAPTER VII

Count Blondeel. My birthday cake. Nearly buried alive. Dislike of Emperor and Empress to music. The real character of the Emperor. His gratitude to all. Pépa. Death of the Duke of Hamilton. The mystery of old Strahan. The Prince of Wales (King Edward) and his "friends." His old tutor. Farini. Bibb, the Clown.

AS I have stated, we happened to know personally, and in most cases very intimately, most of the persons connected with the terrible tragedy of the Mexican Empire and in this group one of the most clever was the Belgian Minister, Comte Blondeel, to spell it correctly, but it was generally pronounced Blondel. He was a man of quite extraordinary ugliness, but he had the astuteness of a Talleyrand; and, insomuch as the Empress Charlotte was a Belgian Princess and Blondeel had been a very intimate friend and counsellor of Leopold I, he was naturally one of the most important diplomatists at the Court of Maximilian. He was, I think, perhaps the most brilliant conversationalist I have ever met; and when he would push his spectacles up over his eyes—over his eyebrows—(as he invariably did when he meant to be brilliant and ironical) and begin, as it were, to play with his adversary in a verbal duel (as I have heard him do many times, and with no ordinary adversaries, old

Prince Gortchakoff, for example, and the late Prince de Sagan, "Prince Charming" and many others) it was what our friends in Whitechapel would call a "treat." Poor Lord Lyons was not a match for him for a moment, and indeed, I believe, was rather afraid of him. I remember as a child asking him once why it was he always pushed his spectacles up from his eyes when he "began to make people laugh" (as I put it), and he very graciously informed me that it was to make himself blind for the time being, for when seeing nothing, he was able to concentrate his mind better. He was very fond of me, and on my ninth birthday brought himself a big cake that his cook Stefano (well-known to all the gourmets of Paris, for old Blondeel entertained a great deal) had specially made for me. But that was not all. Blondeel insisted on cutting a big slice of the cake himself and handing it to me saying "Now be careful how you eat it!" I should think so indeed. The dear old chap had put in the slice of cake he handed to me, a pair of gold sleeve links with my initial in black enamel.

Before we knew him and when he was Belgian Minister in Constantinople, Count Blondeel had had the most terrible experience—that of being very nearly buried alive. Catalepsy, of course, is rare but it sometimes occurs after the plague. Blondeel caught some malady, not the plague, and, as was supposed, died of it. His body was laid out and ready for burial and he heard and knew

everything and yet could give no sign of life. He was saved by the merest accident or, as I told him years afterwards, because he had been so good God could not let him be murdered in that way. He was a very devout Catholic, and at the same time, a very charitable man: and as the supposed corpse lay on the bed in the Belgian Legation, it heard a violent dispute going on between some Turkish official and the Roman Catholic Priest; the Turk wishing him to be buried under some kind of memorial in some public place in recognition of his philanthropy; but the priest pleading that he should simply be buried in the Christian Cemetery at Pera. I remember old Blondeel saying he could hear every word of this discussion and could hear his private secretary Berghmans (a most horrid man I always thought) sobbing by his bedside. It was very hot weather, and the windows were all open, and as this wrangling went on, the doctor of the Legation pulled down the sheet from the supposed corpse to see how far decomposition had progressed. No sign of it at all! How strange! Could this by any possible chance be a case of catalepsy? He had seen such, but only after the plague and this man had not died of the plague. Still how extraordinary, not the slightest symptom of even the beginning of decomposition! It might be catalepsy after all: at all events it was worth looking into. So he began with his lancet, and for a time he was unsuccessful: but just as he was giving up in despair, a little blood came! The body was immedi-

ately removed to a yacht on the Bosphorus and kept on deck, and by degrees life came back. As a matter of fact Blondeel did not die till thirty years later—in Florence.

But to revert to the old Second Empire days, it is a curious and but little-known fact that both the Emperor and Empress positively disliked music: it is not only that they had no ear for it, but that they both positively *disliked* it. There was, indeed, one air, and one only, which the Empress liked—the "Mandolinata" by Paladilhe—and she was often humming the sad, haunting tune. I remember my father saying that over in London before the Prince had been elected President, he made a bet with him that he, Louis Napoleon, could not whistle "God Save the Queen," and won the bet. But if he disliked all music, his very special horror was that dreary melody, "Partant pour la Syrie," composed by his mother, Queen Hortense, and adopted as the National Anthem when he became Emperor, and which, of course, would be blared out by the band or orchestra on all official occasions. I have heard my father repeatedly say (and he knew him very intimately) that Louis Napoleon was one of the most lovable men it was possible to imagine. He was absolutely unassuming (all the claptrap, limelight, and theatrical business was concocted for him and forced on him by his entourage:—Fleury, the son of a milliner, but a very charming man; Persigny, son of a pastry cook, etc.) and not only unassuming, but even meek and humble by nature, asking advice like a child even about little simple

social things, so as not to make a mistake; very much as old Mrs. Paran Stevens—mother of the late Lady (Arthur) Paget—asked me once on her first visit to England how to address a duke, "as she did not want to make a fool of herself." It is generally supposed that when a young man, Louis Napoleon was very poor. This is absolutely wrong. When he was in London before his Presidency—in the old Gore House days—he never had less than £3,000 a year, and that, in those days, for an unmarried man, who did not care for gambling or betting, was ample, although, of course, double that would be considered penury by young bachelors of the present day. When I say this I know what I am talking about, for I had it not only from my father, but from an old Englishman, retired solicitor, named Arnold, living in Paris, who had on many occasions acted for the Prince and through whose hands the Prince's income for a long time passed. He was generous to a fault, as kind hearted as a child; could never find it in his heart to say "No"; and the Empress would often laughingly threaten to cut off his moustache, because, as she truly said, whenever a beggar or petitioner with no matter how ridiculous a request came to him and saw him put up his hand to twirl his moustache, he knew at once his prayer would be granted. It was, indeed, this extreme simplicity (that of a child) and kindness that was his undoing. He was not a fool by any means—quite the reverse, but a gentle, simple, kind-hearted man who,

if you would only let him enjoy the society of as many pretty women as he could entertain, would ask for nothing more. His brother Morny could refuse, could scheme, could command, could make himself be obeyed. But when Morny died, the Emperor was unable to cope with men like Rouher, Emile Ollivier, and *tutti quanti,* and still less because he had always his cousin "Plon Plon," notwithstanding the fact that he had loaded him with favours, scheming against him, and even sometimes (as in a famous speech in the Senate) openly insulting him. The Emperor would never speak ill of anyone (not even at the end—at Chislehurst): and when my father told him once that some asses in London said Poole the tailor had helped him with money for conspiracy purposes, he only smiled sadly and said: *"Vraiment!* How silly people are! Well, you know better than that, don't you?" I have already spoken of his gratitude and of his never forgetting a kindness. One of the jailors at the prison of Ham had been kind to him when he was a prisoner there; so when he came to the throne he sent for the man, loaded him with favours, and attached his two daughters to the household of the Empress as extra dressing maids—berths where they made plenty of money apart from their fixed wages, for most of the Empress's very splendid dresses were given twice a year to the servants as perquisites. But here I must say a word about a very curious personality—Pépa.

Pépa was a Spanish girl who had been a servant

in the household of the Empress's mother, Mme. de Montijo, in the old days when the Countess de Teba (Eugénie) was a child; and so when this lady became Empress of the French, she remembered this girl and sent for her, and made her her chief dressing maid. I remember her very well: she was forever coming to our house to see the servants (we had a very handsome young English groom named Richard, of whom she was somewhat enamoured) and would sometimes induce my mother's maid, Elise, to show her some of my mother's splendid laces and ask her if she could not persuade Madame to sell some of them: one set of four deep flounces of old *point d'Angleterre,* worth more than a thousand pounds a flounce; and another, a kind of tunic of old *point d'Alençon* (Princess Henry of Battenberg has one like it that belonged to Katherine of Aragon) being very specially coveted by her for sale purposes. Pépa was a coarse, rough peasant girl, but she was by no means a fool, and knew how to amass a very considerable fortune while her mistress was at the Tuileries, and followed her into exile after the Franco-Prussian war and died in this country. The Empress was very fond of her and would never listen to anything said against her, much to the annoyance of the old Duchesse de Bassano who knew perfectly well the woman was a thief and a courtesan, and had only one redeeming trait in her character—her devotion to her mistress. Pépa could never be trusted to be left alone in a room,

and once there was a great fuss in our apartment because Pépa, having been left alone for a moment by accident, was discovered by a footman to be calmly reading a letter received that morning by my father from Prince Gortchakoff, and which he had carelessly thrown open on to the table. There was nothing, of course, of the least importance in the letter, but Pépa got a good scolding all the same.

I have spoken of my friend, the late Duke of Hamilton. His father, who, of course, I do not remember at all, was a very handsome man and a great favourite at the Tuileries. He came about his death in the following tragic fashion. I have the facts from old Strahan (of whom I shall speak later) who was—quite unwittingly, of course—in some measure the cause of the tragedy, and so may be credited with knowing something about it. The premier Duke of Scotland (like the premier Duke of England, spoken of by de Quincey) used on certain nights to get drunk on *principle:* that is he would begin drinking at one place; then move on to another, and there get still more drunk; then on to another and get drunker still; and so on, till he reached his final resting place, drank his last drink and became insensible. What the first resting and drinking places honoured by his Grace were, I do not know, but the last two were the Café Anglais, where it was understood Strahan always was to meet him punctually and at a fixed hour; and then, Strahan would pilot him across the Boulevard to the Maison Dorée where the final potations would be absorbed. One night as arranged, and as usual,

the Duke came very punctual and very drunk to the Café Anglais. Strahan was not there. The Duke was angry, but still absorbed his penultimate drinks as per programme, and then, *tant bien que mal,* made his way alone across the Boulevard to the Maison Dorée, the famous restaurant that stood on the corner of the Rue Lafitte. The Duke went in by the Rue Lafitte, by the door leading to the Cabinets particuliers, and clambering up the steep flight of stairs, stood at the top, and began calling out in French, "Waiter, waiter." A young man, a new man, came—a man who did not know who the very handsome drunken man was—possibly the only waiter in the place who did not—(the Devil arranges things so) and when the Duke swore at him and told him to send the proprietor Verdier to him at once, he hesitated. This enraged the Duke still more; he swore again, and made as if to strike the man; the man dodged the blow and pushed the Duke (he swore afterwards unintentionally), who fell backwards down the whole length of the stairs, each step of which was tipped with brass, and lay senseless at the bottom. He was taken back to the Hotel Bristol; everything was done; the Empress came herself from the Tuileries, sat by his bedside and put ice to his feet, but all in vain. He never recovered consciousness and died in a few hours. The Empress (through the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn) was a kinswoman of his and very proud of the fact, and so curiously enough it came about that my friend, whom the waiter made premier Duke of Scotland by his fatal push, found

himself cousin, so to speak, to both the Emperor and Empress; to the Emperor by the Beauharnais family (the Duchess of Hamilton was a princess of Baden) and to the Empress by the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn, doubtless a reason (apart from his great personal charm) of his great popularity at the Tuileries where, as I say, his father before him had always been one of the *intimes*. Now a word about Strahan.

Strahan was a mystery; that is, he was an absolute mystery to all Frenchmen, and to all foreigners in fact, and to most of his countrymen, at least the younger ones; and those of the older generation of his countrymen who knew anything, said nothing. He was a middle-aged man (about 50) when I knew him, getting grey: and always smoking a big meerschaum pipe. Everyone knew him and liked him; he was a member of the Jockey Club and a great personal friend of the late Duke of Beaufort (the very beau ideal of a grand seigneur) and of the Prince of Wales and went everywhere (among men) and knew everyone—always smoking his big meerschaum. At first they objected at the Jockey Club to the meerschaum pipe; but Strahan insisted and they gave way. The Prince of Wales was particularly fond of him, and so also was the Duke of Edinburgh. The Prince always sent for anyone he wanted to see, but he never had to send for Strahan: he would be sure to meet him at the Jockey Club in the Rue Scribe. By the way, Strahan had been a member before the Club went to the Rue Scribe, when it was over Devisme's, the

Arquebusiers, higher up the Boulevards. Strahan was always full of amusing gossip that the Prince liked, and sometimes Strahan would be the whole day long in Paris with him. One of these occasions I remember especially, for I had been asked by His Royal Highness to do something for him; and as I came back from time to time to report in the little entresol in the Hotel Bristol (he did not move up to the premier till he became King) I found there during the whole course of the afternoon Strahan and, of course, his big meerschaum pipe. The Prince, who had arrived that morning when I went to write my name down, received me, and as usual alone: and as usual also said, "Please send old Brasseur to me." Brasseur was his old French tutor, and the Prince, who was kindness itself, never failed to send for him at once whenever he came to Paris. But this morning it had not been only "Please send old Brasseur to me," but "I saw just now from the window my friend (I think the name was Farini, but am not quite sure) pass. Please be kind enough to hunt him up and send him to me." As I say, I think the name was Farini, or something like it. At all events, "My friend," whatever his name was, was an acrobat who had performed in London at the Alhambra. He took a devil of a lot of finding, but I ran him to earth at last; and I came back every now and then to report lest I should be found guilty of carelessness or lacking in respect to my future sovereign, and as I say all that entire afternoon old Strahan was there—with, of course, many others. "My friend"

applied to an actor or acrobat, or what not, was by the by nothing new to the lips of the Prince of Wales, who always spoke of Joey Bibb, the clown, as "My friend Joey Bibb"; indeed Bibb told me that many years before when the Prince was staying at a country house not far from Scarborough, where Bibb happened to be performing, he sent for Bibb, made him make up his (the Prince's) face like a clown—big patches of bright red and black on his face that was whitened—put Joey's white skull cap on and went down to dinner in that guise. I know this, of course, to be true from a lot of other people who were there (old Christopher Sykes for one) but Joey told me the story himself and said it was "great fun" making up the Prince's face.

Well, the mystery of Strahan was solved for me at last by Lord Marcus Beresford, by far the nicest of the Beresford boys except perhaps young Delaval, whom I remember saying good-bye to at the door of their house in Charles Street (now, I think, the Caledonian Club) just before he started for America: I was staying near by with the then Lord Derby—Edward—uncle of the present peer. Strahan's father had been mixed up with a fraudulent banking business for which a well-known baronet got penal servitude (my father went to see him in prison) and having been sentenced to imprisonment, the son had removed what the old Duchess of Montrose used to call his "Pernaytes" to Paris and taken up his abode there.

CHAPTER VIII

Old Joachim Murat. Born a "pheasant." Prince Achille Murat. Mme. Sigismond Lacroix. Milan of Serbia. Prince Roland and Princess Jeanne Bonaparte. Mlle. Blanc. Prince Henry of Battenberg. Mlle. d'Imécourt and Musurus. The governess. Mrs. Paran Stevens. Fancy dress ball at Marlborough House. French maid. Betting at Pratts. The famous Sabran. "A morning call."

AMONG the earliest arrivals, of course, after the *coup d'état,* to see what was to be picked up, was old Joachim Murat (son of the *beau sabreur,* ex-King of Naples and brother-in-law of the Great Emperor) who came from New Jersey, U.S.A., where he had been a school teacher and farmer. A friend of ours met him on board ship and he explained that he was on his way to Paris to "see what his cousin could do for him." He had the famous plumes of his father with him in a bag and showed them to our friend, who said they looked very dirty and mangy. Old Murat (I remember him well, a handsome old man—all the Murats are handsome) was very uneducated (although he had taught French in the States) and said to our friend—"How strange life is! My father was born a pheasant"—he meant a peasant, (but pronounced *paysan,* faisan) "and died a King" (as a matter of fact the first and great

Murat was an ostler in a country inn), "and here am I, born a King and shall probably die a pheasant!" But he did not die a pheasant. The Emperor (kind as he ever was to everybody) loaded him with honours and wealth. I knew them all well, and a very handsome lot they were too, beautiful Princess Anna, afterwards Duchesse de Mouchy; and Joachim, Achille and Louis. Oddly enough (or, perhaps, I should say naturally enough) they all spoke English with a Yankee drawl and twang—just as M. Clemenceau does (he learnt his when a doctor in the States)—and I shall never forget how ridiculous it sounded when one day at a review at Longchamps where I was with my mother and old Lady Howard in a carriage close by where Prince Achille sat on horseback, handsome as Apollo in his uniform, giving his orders in a clear, ringing tone, and, of course, in perfect French, he turned to us and, his voice dropping to the drawl of a Yankee bar tender, said: "Terribly hot, ladies, ain't it?" This, by the way, is very like what happened many years later (1879) when one night I went to the Summer Circus in the Champs Elysées, with the Prince of Wales, Charley Buller, the Duc de Castries and others; and as we stood in the stable, a bareback rider—described on the programme as "Senorita Chiquita Alvarez from Madrid"—as she passed us, making for her dressing room, seeing the Prince was an Englishman but, of course, not recognizing him, said casually, with a very un-Castilian accent, "B—'ot, ain't it!" I thought Charley Buller (who was deputed by the

Prince to look after his Indian things at the Exhibition) would die of laughter, and, indeed, the Prince of Wales looked so astonished (he was talking to de Castries at the time) that it was comic enough. By the way, this matter of the Yankee twang does not apply to Prince Louis, who, I think, was born in France and who has always been one of the most popular men both in French and English Society.

Prince Achille married the Princess Salome of Mingrelia, and the match was made by a very extraordinary lady—whom I knew well very many years later—Mme. Lacroix, widow of the translator of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in which Mounet Sully acted so well at the Comedie Française. This lady made match-making her business, but was not openly a matrimonial agent like the famous Foy (who among other marriages arranged that of poor Lafarge and Maria Capelle which resulted in the famous murder trial) and only had people of some importance on her books. As I say, it was she who married Achille Murat to the Mingrelian Princess and (many years later, of course, and when I knew her) arranged the marriages between Prince Milan of Serbia (afterwards King) and Nathalie Kechko, daughter of a rich officer who died colonel of one of the Russian cavalry regiments; and that of Prince Roland Bonaparte and Mlle. Blanc, one of the daughters of old Blanc of Monte Carlo; and that of Prince Constantine Radziwill with another of the Blanc girls; and finally that of Prince Roland's sister Jeanne, to the Marquis de Villeneuve Barge-

mont. Now I know what I am talking about, and what I say about these matters may be taken to be absolutely correct in every particular. Milan of Serbia was a long time on her hands—he was an Obrenovitch—that is to say, his grandfather had been a swineherd, and Milan himself was a common, coarse, brutal kind of man with a most horrible voice. I dined with him and Jim Bennett at the Café Anglais in the public dining room once, and he talked so loud and made such a noise eating that everyone was staring at us. No French father would allow his daughter to marry him even with the chance of the Serbian throne in the future, and so Mme. Lacroix had to find him a wife whose father had large estates in Bessarabia, and who was said to belong to the old Moldavian nobility. But it was different with Prince Roland Bonaparte. He and his sister Jeanne were children of that ruffian Prince Pierre Bonaparte who murdered Victor Noir, who married a very common woman who kept a milliner's shop. The children had absolutely nothing: Prince Roland had £30 a year only—his pay as lieutenant in a Cavalry Regiment, and Jeanne was studying drawing in Julien's well-known art school in the Passage des Panoramas with a view to becoming a governess. Now it so happened that at this same art school Mlle. Blanc (the daughter of Blanc who ran the gambling tables at Monte Carlo, and of the woman whom he eventually married, and who began life in rags in the streets, running barefoot after carriages and hold-

ing up little bunches of flowers for sale) came to learn drawing. Princess Jeanne was a very nice unassuming girl and so was Mlle. Blanc; and so when Prince Roland came to old Maman Lacroix in the Rue Pasquier and asked her to find him a wife, she (who knew everything that was going on) said, "Parfaitement, but I want to see your sister first." Roland brought his sister; Mme. Lacroix arranged to meet Mlle. Blanc: Roland was brought in, and so the match was brought about—very naturally, and without any scandal, for it was not thought strange that Roland should frequently go to Julien's school to see his only sister, and that he should meet at the same time, his sister's greatest friend. So his income jumped from £30 to £20,000 a year owing to the artfulness of Mme. Lacroix.

One man old Mme. Lacroix had for a long time on her books; nobody would have him although he was very good looking and very charming in every way, and so she had at last to give him up in despair and let him go. He did "*go*" indeed: he came over here and married one of the most charming of all Queen Victoria's charming daughters, Princess Beatrice, for it is of Prince Henry of Battenberg that I am speaking; "Liko" as he was familiarly called. At one time Mme. Lacroix thought she had at last found a wife for him—Mlle. d'Imécourt, the niece of that splendid officer and gentleman—General de Gallifet. This young lady had had a very sad experience of life. She was an heiress, and young Musurus (son of the popular Turkish

Ambassador in London) made up his mind to marry her. But her mother (her father was dead), Mme. d'Imécourt (Gallifet's sister), was a very strong-minded lady and would not listen for one moment to young Musurus, although he was (like not a few Turks of good family) a Roman Catholic. Now just then a clever French novel *Inez Parker* had come out, the moral of which was, that if you want to marry an heiress and the parents object, the best thing is to compromise irretrievably the young lady—cause her name to be scandalously connected with yours—and then the father and mother will be more or less compelled to let the damager have the damaged goods. So Musurus began a most dastardly plot: he contrived to get a very vicious girl engaged as governess to Mlle. d'Imécourt, and this horrible creature set to work to demoralize in every way in her power the young heiress confided to her charge, and let her meet Musurus secretly and often, and the result was an elopement. The runaway couple were not caught for a fortnight, but as they had been living together as man and wife all that time, Musurus felt sure the mother would give her consent. But he didn't know the lady with whom he had to deal. Mme. d'Imécourt not only took back her daughter and refused to let Musurus marry her, but (except for the intervention of General de Gallifet, who wished to prevent further scandal) would have begun criminal proceedings against the young Turk for abduction of a minor. Mme. Lacroix approached

Mme. d'Imécourt after this with a view to inducing her to let her daughter marry Prince Henry; but no; Mme. d'Imécourt detested all Germans, and told old Lacroix she would sooner see her daughter married to a nigger!

Although Mme. d'Imécourt was prevented by her brother from prosecuting young Musurus, she sifted the matter of the demoralizing governess she had been induced to take into her household, and found out that this horrible woman had actually been originally in a house of ill fame, but had been taken out by Salamanca, the Madrid banker (who afterwards committed suicide), and sent about through his instrumentality as governess to different families till at length when she came to Mme. d'Imécourt she had quite a sheaf of good and *bona fide* references. This reminds me of a similar instance that took place in London.

When Mrs. Paran Stevens came to London with her beautiful and most charming daughter Minnie (the late Lady (Arthur) Paget) they put up at the York Hotel in Albemarle Street, in those days a fashionable hostelry. They were taken up by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of Sutherland (it was then "Marietta" wanted to know how to address a duke) and so forth, and a great fuss very properly was made of these charming ladies. Mrs. Stevens wanted a French maid and instead of going to the proper quarter to get one, she listened to a silly Irish Countess who had heard of one from a friend who highly

recommended her. She was sent for and came to the hotel and was engaged by Mrs. Stevens, who very soon got to like her immensely. About this time there was a great effort being made to have an invitation to a Court Ball sent to Mrs. Stevens and her daughter. The difficulty was they had neither of them been presented: and this difficulty proved insurmountable; the Queen was as adamant—and although the Prince of Wales made it almost a personal matter with Lord Hertford, nothing could be done! So the kind-hearted Prince of Wales, to make up for this disappointment, decided that he and his gracious Consort would themselves give a ball at Marlborough House for the American ladies. It was to be a Fancy Dress Ball and Miss Minnie went as the Queen of Hearts—I can see her now arranging the dress on a mannequin in their sitting room at the hotel. The question was, what jewels should they wear—Mrs. Stevens had, as was well known, some splendid *parures,* and it was finally decided by the ladies to ask the advice of the French maid whom they knew had most excellent taste in all matters connected with *la toilette.* So the very night of the ball (for the maid said she could give no opinion worth having till she saw the ladies dressed) all the jewels were brought from a safe deposit and spread out on the bed for the maid to inspect. She went over them all carefully, taking up one after the other, putting it on one of the ladies and then, dissatisfied, putting it back into its case. At last she said to Mrs. Stevens, "Does Madame

want my frank, true and candid opinion?" "Of course we do." "Well, Madame, it is this—beautiful, surpassingly beautiful, as your jewels are, I advise neither you nor Mademoiselle to wear any at all! Everyone has heard of your wealth and no doubt of your beautiful jewels; everyone will be expecting to see you and Mademoiselle decked with them; all the Princesses and Duchesses and *grandes dames* of England will be there to-night wearing their historic and family jewels and expecting, of course, to see you and Mademoiselle come covered with diamonds. Let them be surprised. Go without any. You neither of you need them: Madame has her splendid regal beauty, and Mademoiselle has, apart from her surpassing loveliness, the greatest beauty of all—the beauty of youth that will far outshine all the gems of all the Duchesses! Wear no jewels, or if any, only the most simple." The idea pleased the ladies and they took the maid's advice, put on some trivial ornaments and went to the ball, leaving the girl to put up the jewels and have them returned to the safe deposit. When they came back from Marlborough House they found both the jewels and the maid had disappeared! So far, perhaps, it was more or less an ordinary robbery; but what Mrs. Stevens found out in her investigations was really very curious. It seems that this girl, a trained and expert thief, had been specially prepared for just such jobs. She had been taught all the duties of a maid to a rich lady; she had begun by entering the service of some middle-class family not worth

robbing, just to get a start; from that place, where she had given every satisfaction, she went to one a step higher in the social scale, and so on, thus obtaining, as it were, a pedigree, till she got to the friend of the Irish Countess—splendid references all along! Then came the rumour of the great wealth and splendid jewels of these American ladies—here was the big *coup* worth trying for! So it was tried for, and as we have seen, it succeeded, for I don't think Mrs. Stevens ever got back her jewels, and I don't remember hearing that the girl was ever caught. Mrs. Stevens told me the story innumerable times, and in fact, was for years telling it to everyone, and no wonder, for it is a most extraordinary and interesting example of how such big *coups* are carefully worked up to, and contains a warning how careful one must be in engaging servants for positions of trust. By the way, there was at that time a book made at Pratt's Club as to whom "the Inn-keeper's daughter," as Miss Minnie was irreverently termed, would marry, and Arthur Paget was not among the leading favourites, the first of whom was Lord Suffield's brother, Walter Harbord; and the second, the eldest son of a duke whose mother cheerfully informed him that if he did propose to the American heiress she would proceed at once to Nice, where her husband happened to be, and tell him his heir was not his son! As a matter of fact, I don't think this would have surprised or perturbed the duke in the least, for Her Grace's arms were

notoriously hospitable. But although not at first in the running, Arthur Paget at length won hands down, as we now know; and speaking of hands, his are almost as shapely (if I remember rightly) as those of Ferdinand of Bulgaria, which great potentate is so wrapt up always in the admiration of his, spreading them out, holding them up, smoothing them down, that his cousin, Princess Louise of Saxe Coburg (daughter of Leopold II of Belgium) once said to him in my presence at Ems, "Comme tu es bete avec tes pattes! Tu les adore n'est ce pas?" It was, by the way, on this occasion and at Ems that I first made the acquaintance of that wicked old lady, Sabran, who nearly half a century before had been imprisoned for pandering to the wickedness of Hope the banker as revealed by the Diary of his iniquities that at his death got into the hands of the police. Everyone knew her in Paris, and I had long known her by sight, but never made her acquaintance till at Ems (where she was supposed to be taking the waters) I was introduced to her by a Belgian—the Vicomte Vilain XIIII—it is the privilege of the family to write Quatorze in that silly way, and it would be grossly improper to write it XIV. I did not see much of old Sabran that season at Ems; but I saw a lot of her during many years afterwards in Paris, where she was a great person in *le monde où l'on s'amuse*. Here is a funny story about her; I often think it would make a good *lever de rideau* and might be called "A Morning Call."

Faithful to the traditions of her youth—although they had enriched her with a long term of penal servitude—old Sabran's special mission in life was to procure for you anything you might happen to desire and which you might find it tedious to try to get for yourself—I don't mean, of course, a bishopric, or a fauteuil at the Academie Française, or the Victoria Cross, but something of more pleasing value, say the smile of one of the divinities of the Foyer de Danse at the Grand Opéra—or anything, in fact, connected with the Paphian Goddess. Her sagacity, prudence and success in the service of Aphrodite were, indeed, so widely known as to be not infrequently generously recognized and made use of by many well-known enemies of sorrow. Now as in the sparrow-drawn car a careless traveller may perchance at times let something drop—say a letter from a pretty married woman telling you how she hates you, and how she adores her legal mate—a communication you very naturally do not want to get to the brute's knowledge, as it would make him vain—any such trifle, if of interest, would generally find its way to the keeping of old Sabran, who was always willing to restore it to the rightful owner provided he or she could prove in round figures their right to possess it. Now in the Rue de l'Elysée, that very pretty street, all the houses in which belonged to the Empress Eugénie, and which runs from the Faubourg St. Honoré to the Champs Elysées, by the side of the official residence of the French President, lived (at the Fau-

bourg end and near the Montmorencys) two friends of mine, the Count and Countess Eugene de Mercy Argenteau—he, a descendant of the nobleman who married Marie Antoinette by proxy in Vienna and brought her to her husband and the scaffold in Paris; and she—a Chimay. She was famous for her beauty and charm; and a lady so unwilling to hide the light of her loveliness under a bushel that not long after her marriage she was well known to be illuminating many a sad and yearning heart. The Count (a particular friend of mine) had been brought up in a most extraordinary way. His father was so strict with him, he told me, that he made him sleep in a bed in the same room, and that bed he *never once slept out of* (for he was educated at home) *till at the age of twenty-two he left it to get married!* The result of the sudden emancipation of this handsome young nobleman with plenty of money and splendid health can be easily imagined. The beauty and charm of his wife were a revelation to him, but revelations often have the awkward habit of leading to other revelations —to a full Apocalyptic troop as it were—and it soon dawned on him that Mme. la Comtesse was not the only lovely woman in Paris; and so, as he found in her the same generous unwillingness to be miserly, this husband and wife soon settled down to a very elastic mutual understanding that each should be free—scandal only to be avoided. Of course, they lived together, and lived very happily together, and had children—one of them, a beautiful girl like her

mother, married Count Hubert d'Avaray—but they both did as they pleased; were not a bit jealous and asked no questions. Now there was an attractive youth at the Russian Embassy named Meissner—a man of no family but a favourite of the ladies (he was, by the way, the father of the famous Mabel Gray's only child—she died in childbirth in Brussels) and Mme. de Mercy Argenteau had been kind to him. It so happened that this young cad lost a lot of money—at least, a lot for him—at the Moutards—the Cercle de la Rue Royale—to wicked old Count d'Andlau, and having had to raise money at once to pay up or else be posted and kicked out, he found himself very hard up one morning when old Sabran called to see if there was anything she could supply him with. He told her of his impecuniosity, and she asked him if he had anything to sell—as, of course, she bought things others did not buy. No; he had nothing. Then he suddenly thought of three very compromising letters—*extremely* compromising letters—that Mme. de Mercy Argenteau had been foolish enough to write to him at the beginning of their flirtation a few weeks before. Old Sabran gave him a thousand francs each for them and at once proceeded to the Rue de l'Elysée. Here the comedy begins. She asked to see the Countess—it was still quite early in the morning, for Meissner was in bed when she saw him, and Mme. de Mercy Argenteau (who knew her by sight and all about her, as everyone did in Paris, but who, of course, had never spoken to her),

scenting danger like the clever woman she was, received the benevolent-looking (she looked, as the Duke of Beaufort said, like the Madonna grown grey) old wretch at once.

"Oh, Mme. la Comtesse. I must beg your pardon a thousand times for daring to intrude upon you—but——" "What can I do for you?" asked the Countess. "Oh, I must beg Mme. la Comtesse to forgive me; but I come on a most unpleasant errand—one most horrible and repugnant to me; indeed, if it were not for the sake of Mme. la Comtesse——" "For *my* sake?" "Yes, Mme. la Comtesse. Please listen. Mme. la Comtesse knows M. Meissner of the Russian Embassy." Mme. de Mercy began to see how the land lay. "I do," she replied coldly. "Well, Madame la Comtesse, a terrible thing has happened to him. He had to discharge a scoundrelly valet of his the other day; and the man, by way of revenge, stole some letters that M. Meissner had been careless enough to leave in an unlocked drawer." Mme. de Mercy Argenteau saw it all now. "Well," she said calmly, "I am sorry to hear M. Meissner lost his letters, but how does that concern me?" "They are from Mme. la Comtesse." "Indeed, are you sure?" "Quite sure, Madame la Comtesse. There are three of them. They are very beautiful and very affectionate letters; Mme. la Comtesse must remember them." "Well, what if I do, what then?" "Oh, Mme. la Comtesse, this awful man wants 10,000 each for them, and says if he doesn't get it by this

afternoon, he will bring the letters himself to M. le Comte at the Cercle de l'Union." "Indeed. How very wicked of him. But why doesn't M. Meissner buy back the letters, for they're his, you know, for letters belong to the person they're addressed to, not to the writer." "Oh, poor M. Meissner! How gladly he would do it! But *le pauvre garçon* hasn't got a penny! Madame has no doubt heard from M. le Comte that poor M. Meissner lost a great deal of money to M. le Count d'Andlau." "Yes, I heard about it." Then she burst out laughing. "My dear Mme. Sabran," she exclaimed, "I know all about you, of course, and I always heard you were such a clever woman. How is it then you have come to me with such a silly tale? Of course, it is all rubbish about the valet: Meissner is a little cad —everyone told me so—and being hard up he wants me to buy back my letters. Unfortunately, for the moment I've no money to waste in such folly. You say they're very compromising?" "Oh, very, very, Madame la Comtesse; indeed, they're beautiful! So passionate." The Countess laughed again. "Yes, I think I remember. Well, there's only one thing to do, for, as you say, one must above all things avoid a scandal. You must go to M. le Comte with them!" "Oh! Mme. la Comtesse can't mean that! Why, if M. le Comte reads these letters he will leave Madame la Comtesse at once!" "Well, even that is better than a scandal. He will certainly never condescend to deal with the valet even supposing he exists, nor, of course, with M. Meissner:

but with you—as he and you are such old friends—he might. He happens luckily to be in just now. There's no time to lose," and she rang the bell. "Take Madame to M. le Comte." "But, Madame," began old Sabran; but the Countess interrupted her. "Now go at once. You say you want to be of service to me: that is the only way. Now leave me. I am very busy this morning." So there was no getting out of it and in a few minutes Sabran found herself in the presence of her old friend and client. "Good God! Toinette, what brings you here?" "Oh, *mon petit* Eugene, I come on a sad errand. You know little Meissner of the Russian Embassy?" "Yes, very well—he's a horrible little cad—what's he been doing to you?" "Oh, nothing to me, *mon ami,* but perhaps you know he's in love with your wife." "So I heard. But what of that? Everyone is, including myself." "Oh, *mon pauvre ami,* she's written him most terrible letters," and then she went on to tell him the yarn about the valet, the thief, the sum required and how she'd been to the Countess, and how she said she had no money but sent her to him. The Count listened greatly amused; then, with difficulty keeping from laughing, said, with assumed gravity, "I'm very sorry to hear M. Meissner has lost so much money he can't buy back these letters, and I deeply sympathize with him for having had so wicked a servant: and I'm sorry to hear, in fact, I admit I'm surprised to hear my wife is so hard up, for after all 30,000 francs is a mere trifle to avert such an awful scan-

dal. And so, as a last resort, and to save my honour, you've come to me? Well, I must see what I can do. But you can't expect me to buy what I don't see. Of course, you have them about you. Let me read them and I pledge you my word I'll give them back to you at once and unharmed if I don't give you 30,000 francs for them. I think you can trust to my honour, can't you?" "Why, of course, I can, *mon petit* Eugene. Here they are." The Count took them; thanked her; lit a cigarette; and began reading them very carefully and gravely: "What beautiful language! How splendid! What passion! How glorious! What an ecstacy of love! *Mon Dieu!* I never thought my dear wife had such fire, such vehemence of desire—such passion in her! She never wrote such letters to me! Oh how true! How tender! Why, it beats Mirabeau; it beats Stendhal—it beats George Sand!" Then when he'd finished the last he folded them and handed them back with a low bow. "My dear Toinette, I'm everlastingly obliged to you for this delicious literary treat: this banquet of verbal passion! I can't say I'm hard up like Meissner and the Countess, and if I hadn't read them I might have given you 60,000 francs for them and it would have been dirt cheap. But as it is, I can't find it in my heart to deprive the public, to deprive my country, of such models of passionate perfect prose. I must brave the scandal and sacrifice myself for the sake of literature! Take them to the *Figaro:* Perivier will pay you well for them. I'll give you a letter to him

if you like. These letters must not be wasted. They are too precious. All France must read them. They are masterpieces!" Sabran looked at him for a moment, then burst out laughing: "*Ma foi*" she cried. "You and your wife are too clever for me! I own I'm beaten! *Dieu de Dieu,* Eugene, you and your wife are simply sublime!" and she threw the letters into the fire.

CHAPTER IX

"Citron." Eliza Cook. The King of Holland. Mme. Musard. The Prince of Orange and Dr. Dieulafoy. Prince Alphonse de Chimay. Michael the murderer. Murder of the Duchesse de Praslin by her husband. The mystery of his death. Strange coincidences. Mrs. Henry Field. The wicked old Duke of Brunswick and his stolen jewels. The centenarian Count Waldeck. Mme. Bordeaux. The Romanoff Princes. Lord Dupplin. His engagement and death. Some sad results of Royal friendship. The Petrarch scandal. Incomes from whist and bezique. Obedine, Duke of Edinburgh and beefsteak and onions. Pleasant results of a good idea. Disappointments as social guide. Duchess of Edinburgh and her father. Unvarying kindness of King Edward. Rudeness of Royalties. The Emperor Paul and his regiment. Nicholas I and his only daughter. Prince Peter of Oldenburg, and how I demoralized him. A wonderful bet, where to lose was impossible.

BIGNONS was the favourite restaurant of that strange creature, William, Prince of Orange (familiarly known as "Citron" among his friends), eldest son of the reigning Sovereign, and Heir Apparent to the Throne of Holland. I knew him very well—as indeed every one in Paris did. His history is a curious one. In the very early 'sixties his father, the King of Holland, sent him to England to offer his hand to Princess Mary of Cambridge—the mother of our present Queen. As the marriage did not altogether suit

Napoleon III, that clever man of the world consulted with Morny, and with Morny's "Amie fidele"—the Comtesse Le Hon (the late Lord Dudley called her and her husband "M. Le Hon and Mme. La Honte!") and they threw across the path of the susceptible Dutch youth during his visit to Paris en route for London, the very pretty American whilom barmaid, Eliza Cook (she used to serve in what was called a "whisky dive" in New York) who, at that time, was famous in the *demi-monde*. The poor Prince fell into the trap; and very soon his flirtation was the talk of Paris (the publicity was, of course, fostered by the Tuileries) and he was seen driving about the town with Eliza in a bright orange-coloured landau with the Royal Arms of Holland on the panels. When at length the Prince had to proceed on his wooing trip, on his arrival in London (the Court was at Windsor) Lord Clarendon informed him that the Queen had heard of his conduct in Paris; was very greatly scandalized; and would not only not allow him to marry her cousin, but would not even receive him, so it would be quite useless for him to go to Windsor. So the Prince returned to Paris and to the smiles of Eliza. But now his father, greatly incensed, stopped supplies. What was to be done? Eliza suggested that she should go to the Hague, see "Citron's" father and try to explain and get him to send at least some money for pressing and immediate needs. The prince consented; Miss Cook went to the Hague; saw the father, and so strong was

her influence that the King took charge of her himself! Great was the scandal in the Dutch capital; so great, indeed, that after a few months the King had to ask Eliza to withdraw, and to facilitate her departure he presented her with the title deeds to a lead mine that was supposed to be useless. Rumour said that old Baron Soubeyran arranged all this. But be that as it may, the mine turned out to be of immense value and Eliza was transformed into a millionairess, for the old King could not get the title deeds back although he tried in every way to do so. Eliza eventually married Musard, the organizer of the popular concerts of that day and lived for many years in great splendour in Paris. She gave very pleasant dinners and was notoriously kind and generous to young men who, for the time being, were in want of ready money; and the calm way in which they took large sums from her was—from our crude, insular point of view—very surprising.

I remember once when Prince Alphonse de Chimay was dining there with me, and he told " la fille Elisa " how he was being pressed by some unreasonable creditor, she sent for her cheque book and gave him a very large sum that he smilingly accepted and gave thanks for, without, so to speak, turning a hair! No wonder he was credited with being the person whom Dumas fils had in mind when he wrote his very disagreeable play "Monsieur Alphonse." Mme. Musard's famous pearl necklace was so heavy that, at the Opera, she would put it on at the

back of her box, sit at the front with it on for a while, and then retire and have it exchanged for a less irksome ornament and come to the front again.

Poor "Citron" never married. His hand was offered (by himself or by intermediaries) all over the place and refused. I myself saw a letter he wrote to an American heiress (she showed it to me and pointed with great pride to the signature "Guillaume d'Orange") in which he said he placed his heart and crown at her feet, and would send a gentleman in waiting from his father's Court for an answer in a week. She replied that she felt the honour so great, and herself so unworthy of it, that she must gratefully decline it, and that, therefore, it would be quite unnecessary to disturb any member of his father's Court to call on her. He lived for years in the Rue Auber near the Opera House, and when he was warned by all the physicians in Paris that unless he reformed he could not live long, he went to the late Doctor Dieulafoy, the famous specialist for renal diseases (he had diabetes) and said, "I come to you to help me, not as a doctor, but as a worker of miracles. I am told I shall die within a year if I don't reform, but may possibly live for five if I do. Now, I have no intention of reforming. Any fool can live who abstains from what's killing him. How long can you keep me alive if I don't reform, but rather, increase my excesses?" Dieulafoy examined him and said, "I can promise your Royal Highness eighteen months more

life, not more, if you don't reform; and I can only promise you that if I see you every day." The bargain was struck, and poor "Citron" died just before the second year was out. He was a kind, good-hearted and very obliging chap: and I remember how he took great pains to obtain from his father the King of Holland, a concession to open a gambling saloon in Flushing to give to Civry, the natural son of the wicked old Duke of Brunswick. The scheme fell through at that time because the King wanted too much backsheesh, but oddly enough was revived not very many years ago and was submitted to the late Panmure Gordon and to Bottomley. Gordon said he had no time; and Bottomley said the scheme was too immoral! By the way, old Baron James de Rothschild ("M. le Pââron!") used to say that the late King of Holland (Citron's father) could absorb more undiluted spirits than any man he ever met. Citron had a certain wit of his own. One day at Bignons, Prince Joseph Lubomirski came in and said "Bonjour, Citron!" To which the Prince replied "Bonjour, Mirski!" To which the Pole replied: "Pardon, Mon Prince, but my name is Lubomirski!" "Not a bit of it," laughed his Royal Highness. "You are not *lu* ("read"—the Pole had written some silly books), "you very certainly are not *beau:* so therefore you're only Mirski."

I have spoken of Prince Alphonse de Chimay; his second wife (his first was, if I remember rightly, a Princess de Beauvau, sister of the Prince de Beau-

vau who was caught cheating at cards) was the grand-daughter of the well-known man familiarly termed "Michel l'Assassin." In the last years of the reign of Louis Philippe (years crowded with terrible and famous crimes, *inter alia* the hideous scandal of Martin du Nord; the murder of the Duchesse de Praslin by her husband the duke) a rich man living in the Rue du Bac was found murdered. Suspicion fell on his servant Michel, to whom he had left all his money, and the man was tried for his life at the Court d'Assises. The evidence against him was strong, but he got off. Nobody, of course, ever spoke to him; but he was a well-known figure in the Bois where he was to be seen every afternoon at the fashionable hour, driving round the Lake lying back in his open landau that was driven by four horses and postilions—*à la* Daumont as it is called—dressed in a dark green livery strongly resembling that worn by the servants of the Imperial Household. And one afternoon this led to a very curious mistake. It was the custom to lower the chains surrounding the Arc de Triomphe to let the Empress (or Emperor when being driven, but he generally drove himself) drive under and through—ordinary persons (and the Emperor even when driving himself) going round: and on the afternoon I am speaking of, the guardians of the Arch, seeing an open carriage with postilions in what they thought was the Imperial livery approaching, they let down the chains. Imagine their amazement and disgust when, too late, they

saw it was Michel the murderer whom they had allowed to drive over the sacred stone of the Legion of Honour!

I have referred to the murder of the Duchesse de Praslin by her husband in the last days of Louis Philippe. The grandson of the murderer, the late duke, was a great friend of mine and a very charming man. He married an American lady I knew, a Miss Forbes (sister of Mme. Odilon Barrot), and this young lady very distinctly "put her foot" in it when he took her down to show her his splendid country seat, Vaux Praslin. It had been the château of the great Fouquet of the days of Louis XIV, and the motto that led to the famous minister's undoing, "Quo non ascendam?" was all over the place. When they got to the picture gallery there were portraits of all the noble family—all the Choiseuils, and all the Praslins—only one was covered. "Whose portrait is that?" asked the American lady. The duke turned and looked at her and then said gravely, "My father." Then in the duke's bedroom another blunder. Over his bed hung a crayon sketch of a lady. "Who is that?" asked Miss Forbes. Again the poor young duke turned and looked at her, and then said sadly, "My mother." Now there was no excuse for these blunders, for the young American knew all about the murder, had indeed taken great pains to provide herself with a full account of the whole tragedy, so much so that when leaning over and looking down into the entrance hall from the first floor. she whis-

pered to a friend of mine: "Do you see how slender the columns are supporting where we stand? Well, he intended to kill her here as if by accident, and it was discovered that he'd had these columns tampered with so that when his wife should lean over as we're doing now she might fall and break her neck!" But the duke did not kill his wife at the country place, but at their town house in the Faubourg St. Honoré, near the British Embassy. It was torn down after the murder and only the entrance archway left for a time, as an arch of infamy. But even that was soon removed; and in the early days of the Empire the Emperor bought the ground and the Rue de l'Elysée was built. The murder was very carefully planned; the duke left almost all the servants in the country; and when the very day before the murder Lady Tankerville (*née* Corisande de Gramont)—whose grandson, the late Lord Tankerville, told me this himself—said to Mme. de Praslin, "But, my dear, aren't you afraid to be almost alone in this big house?" the poor Duchess replied, "How can I be afraid? Isn't my husband close by me?" The duke tried first to stab her in her bed, but only succeeded in wounding her, and she sprang out and fled from him screaming for help and mercy. He followed her, repeatedly stabbing her in the back as she ran, till at last she fell exhausted and died. And then a strange thing happened. There were four doors in the room: two leading into the corridor; one leading into the bedroom where the attack had begun;

and one leading into a small room from which there was no other exit. The duke had locked one of the doors leading into the corridor, but had omitted to lock the other; and just as the duchess fell dead, this door opened, and a manservant, alarmed by the cries, appeared. Praslin seized the terrified man by the arm and pushing him into the little room, locked him in. No doubt, if he had thought of it, he would have killed him too, for the man's evidence against him at the trial was, of course, overwhelming. Then the duke rushed into his own bedroom, hastily washed his hands, and put on white kid gloves to hide any possible stains that might remain on them. In a minute the police were in the room: there was the duchess lying dead, bathed in blood. The duke was very calm and said he heard her scream, but as she suffered from bad dreams—nightmares—he thought nothing of it. Then the police, naturally thinking it odd a man in his dressing gown should be wearing white kid gloves, tore them from his hands, and his nails were found full of blood! In a few minutes, of course, the servant in the next room was released. The duke was not guillotined; he, of course, would have mounted the scaffold without a shadow of doubt, but to avoid such a scandal Louis Philippe allowed poison to be brought him in prison. He is supposed to have not only taken the poison but broken up the bottle and swallowed the broken glass as well; but the whole thing was shrouded in mystery and the

inquest held in the prison many people said was a farce, and that the duke was not dead, but had been allowed to escape. Be this as it may, the following fact is rather curious, and was told to me by a very old resident in Boulogne. One of the tradesmen in that town had formerly been the valet of the Duc de Praslin. Just before the death, or reported death, of the duke, the man sold up everything, disappeared and was never seen again. People said he had gone to help to hide his master. Another very mysterious thing is that my friend the duke used very often suddenly and most mysteriously to leave Paris and come over quite by himself to England, but where he went, or why he came to this country not even his dearest friends ever knew. It was said that the murderer did not really die till a very old man, but lived in close seclusion not far from Hastings. This terrible murder was committed because the duke was in love with the governess of his children—a Mlle. de Luzy. This woman after the trial went to America and married a clergyman, Henry Field, brother of Dudley Field (the notorious legal adviser of the notorious Erie Ring—Gould and Fiske), father of Lady Musgrave, and of Cyrus Field, the famous pioneer of the Transatlantic cable. She revisited Paris very many years later, and I met her at old Mrs. Ward's—the mother of the late Genevieve Ward. I looked at her with great curiosity as being the cause of this awful tragedy, and was amazed to hear her say smilingly to a lady, "Oh, yes, I know

Paris, of course, very well, that is the Paris of very many years ago. I have such delightful recollections of it."

I referred just now to Civry, the natural son of the Duke of Brunswick—father of the Civry so well known in the cycling world. The wicked old duke (he lived to a very great age) I remember well in Paris. When still very young his reputation was so abominable that when he came to try to marry George IV's only child, His Majesty sent him about his business. His conduct in his Duchy was so disgraceful that he had to fly, but he took all the Ducal Regalia with him! Endless lawsuits were the result, but the Duke kept the jewels—by some flaw in the law, or by some trick, they remained in his possession all his life—that is nearly all of them: and at his death he bequeathed them to the town of Geneva, which out of gratitude erected an equestrian statue of him—near which, by the way, the Empress Elizabeth of Austria was assassinated. I have said he left "nearly all," because he was constantly being robbed by his servants; and at last had them put in a safe next to his bed, and slept with a loaded revolver under his pillow. Of course, the jewels were magnificent, and he used to wear a great many of them on his person—although not, of course, the most valuable. Once my father met him at a reception of the Duchesse Pozzo di Borgo, and one of the ladies of the Torlonia family happening to be standing near, my father called the old villain's attention to

some splendid emeralds she was wearing. "They're not so fine as these," said the old duke (he was nearly eighty then), and calmly revealed the magnificent emeralds he was using as buttons for his pants. He used to live in a house painted bright pink in the Avenue Friedland, near Mme. Nathaniel de Rothschild, and drive every afternoon in the Bois in a glass coach drawn by a pair of cream-coloured Hanoverian horses. I remember him well, for he was a very small, shrivelled up man, and wore a spun glass wig; and the way he would wriggle and squirm to bow to my mother always amused me. He was nearly a hundred when he died.

But I have seen a man much older than that, a man far more than a hundred years old, a man who, I believe, had been a page of Louis XV! One day, about 1879, I think, I met the late Lord Ronald Gower on the Boulevard des Italiens near the Crédit Lyonnais and took him into the Bodega to have a drink. I also wanted to see my trainer who was waiting for me there. On leaving, and just as I was saying good-bye to him in the street, Ronald Gower said, "Wait a minute. Here's something that will interest you. Watch the man I'm going to speak to, watch him closely." He walked up to a little man, very thin, with white hair, very cadaverous face, wearing a very tightly buttoned coat that made him look almost like a doll. They had a long talk together; the old man laughed very often; and seemed quite lively. At

last they parted and Gower came back to me. It was the famous centenarian Count Waldeck—at that time, I believe, 115 years old. He seemed lively and cheerful enough, but I daresay he regretted the days of La Dubarry.

This centenarian was a great friend of an old lady I knew very well (although I never met him there, indeed, never saw him but that once on the Boulevard with Ronny Gower)—Mme. Bordeaux. This very curious person lived in a charming entresol on the Rue de Rivoli very near the Rue St. Florentin. She was highly respectable when I knew her, but I have heard that she had had a somewhat tempestuous past. She at one time held the rather odd post of "Keeper of the Imperial Laces" in the household of the Consort of that very handsome, very kind, sovereign Alexander II of Russia; and so her apartment in Paris was the rendezvous of all the Princes of the Romanoff family whenever they happened to find themselves in the French capital; they called her "petite Maman" and used her rooms as if it was their home—making tea, running out to buy cakes to bring back and eat there—in fact, acting like schoolboys—especially, big, fair, good-natured Alexis (I think he was High Admiral of the Russian Fleet), who used to sprawl on the floor teasing the old woman's dog, and playing all kinds of monkey tricks—going to the door once, I remember, when I was having tea with them, as if he were a servant, and gravely saying to the visitor, "No, Madame is not

at home!" I do not think the Prince of Wales knew her, but the Duke of Edinburgh was often there, as was Macduff (afterwards Fife), Duppy, and a lot more. She tried to get Duppy married and very nearly succeeded. Helen Rothschild would not have him; Miss Vanderbilt would not have him—he proposed to her at the top of the Colonne Vendôme, of all places in the world, and she told him she was very sorry but she had promised to marry the doctor who had seen her through the measles (which she did), Dr. Seward Webb; old Sewing Machine Singer's widow would not have him for one of her charming daughters (she said they must choose for themselves); so old Mme. Bordeaux took him in hand and ere long got him engaged to a lady—Mlle. de Ribeaucourt, who had the required dowry. But the marriage never took place, for death intervened. Lord Dupplin was always acting like a big schoolboy, and one day going with his mother and the late Duke of Marlborough to call on the Prince of Monaco at his palace, Duppy ran on ahead, jumping three steps at a time, when suddenly he fell—peritonitis. The poor chap died a little later, and it was a hard job to get permission to have his body removed from the Principality to Scotland—it always is. Poor George Dupplin! he was a strange personality—but lovable after all. His many failings sprang chiefly from the fact that—as in many cases—his being taken up by the Prince of Wales led him into habits of extravagance that weakened his moral

sense and led him to do things of which, but for this expensive Royal intimacy, he would never have been guilty. There were many similar cases, and I could fill a volume with a catalogue of the names alone—Charles Buller, Joey Aylesford, Tom Pratt—*mais à quoi bon?* Their name is legion. The Prince was very good-natured, but somewhat thoughtless, and it never occurred to him that his friendship could do harm to any man. When he heard of the sudden social collapse of a friend and it came to his knowledge that the catastrophe had been brought about by living beyond his means, it never struck him that his intimacy with the man might have been the chief cause of that extravagance; and, of course, no one ever dared to give him any hint of the truth. Kind and generous to a fault—always ready to listen to any tale of woe from man or woman, no matter how long or how wearisome; always ready to help with advice, money, and personal support anyone in trouble of any kind, he little thought how often he himself, by his very kindness was the core and root of the trouble. But I shall have occasion to speak of this later. The scratching of Petrarch for the Derby caused a great scandal—it was the year Duppy's friend and mine, Alec Baltazzi, won with Kisber, and it was preceded by a painful scene during the Stockbridge Races. George Dupplin told me all about it himself, so it should be correct. He had been playing (I forget what the game was) and winning—winning big money; then luck turned and he lost not only

all he had won, but a lot more. Then he said—"Gentlemen, I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to wait for your money. It's not in my power to pay you now." Lord Sefton (father of the present peer) got up and put his back to the door to prevent escape and gave poor Duppy a very bad *quart d'heure*. Did he think that was the conduct of a gentleman? How dared he sit down and win their money that he knew would have been paid to him at once when he knew he could not pay if they won his? There was a very painful scene. Then came the Petrarch scandal, and Duppy found it convenient to live in Paris. He was a funny chap; he never would dress, but roam about after his bath nearly naked, much to the dismay of the young governess of his only child, by his divorced wife, Marie, a fair-haired delicate child who eventually followed the example of her aunt (who married Prince Alexander Munster) and married a German—Hindenburg, nephew, I believe, of that very repulsive person, Marshal Von Hindenburg.

Dupplin was one of the best whist players in the world, a really wonderful player; and as Raymond Seillière was an equally good bezique player, no ordinary man who risked his luck with either of these two gentlemen at his special game had what is known as "the ghost of an earthly!" And yet many tried; or I might rather say, were induced to try; and very much golden plumage was left. There were many sufferers, but there was one man in particular—a Russian—who was

the source of a very comfortable yearly income (quite £10,000 each) to Seillière and to Duppy. His name was Obedine—a man of no family, but great wealth—who did not mind in the least losing a pot of money to the brother of the Princesse de Sagan, and to a friend of the future king of England—for the Prince of Wales did not withdraw his friendship from Duppy after the Petrarch trouble, and indeed, it was due to his own personal influence that Lord Dupplin was allowed to remain a member of the Paris Jockey Club. Every year regularly Obedine would come from Russia, first to London and then to Paris; and every year return to the banks of the Neva very many thousand pounds the poorer for the bad luck he had had by the side of the Thames and Seine. It became monotonous; and one day a happy thought struck me and I said to Duppy: "Why don't you ask Obedine what he'd pay to be received by the Tsar? He's such a hopeless cad I should think he'd pay anything. You can manage it, through the Duke of Edinburgh; if not, I can through——" "Gad!" cried Duppy—"that's a splendid idea!" Obedine was in London at the time (that's what made me think of it, for he was always stopping me in the street), had just been duly "whisted" by Duppy, and was about to be pioneered by him over to Paris to be beziqued by the swarthy and unclean Raymond, physically the dirtiest man with whom I ever sat at table. Dupplin was an artful man and knew just what to do. He had rooms over Dent's in

Piccadilly (corner of Albemarle Street) and he invited the Duke of Edinburgh to a *tête-à-tête* dinner there (at a club there might be interruption and this was "business") and gave the Duke the dish he loved most of all—a huge underdone beefsteak smothered in onions, and a magnum of Ruinart's Black Label—I don't think the Duke would have refused to dine with a collier if he could have had this loathsome dish. An agreement was easily come to; Obedine would have to pay a million and a half francs—£60,000—which would have to be deposited at the Crédit Lyonnais in the name of Eliot Yorke (at that time, I think, equerry to the Duke), half of which would go to Duppy and friends, and half to—Eliot Yorke (!!); and on these conditions he, the Duke, would use his influence with his Imperial father-in-law to induce him to receive, at some kind of audience to be concocted *ad hoc,* the millionaire outsider. It all went off beautifully: Obedine was delighted: the money was deposited: the Emperor received him one morning at a special and private audience at the Winter Palace, and everyone was happy! Even I was not forgotten, and was enabled to buy a horse I wanted. Such is the reward of having a good idea. Seillière was quite out of it and cursed me, but his malediction gave me great pleasure.

But I was not always so lucky in my venal ventures to introduce the rich and deserving leper to the undeserving clean. Not long after this, when my account was very much overdrawn, I met

a man named Macdonald who had been born a peasant on the estate of the Duke of Sutherland; worked there for some time; then went to Canada; made a fortune and returned to England—an unmarried rugged Scot, very uncouth. He belonged to a ridiculous club called the Wanderers whose quarters were where a bank is now, corner of Pall Mall and Waterloo Place—opposite the Athenæum. I used to meet him lurching down Pall Mall clad in the vilest tweeds, and looking like a Border ballad going to get drunk wi' Rabbie Burns. His solicitors, who only knew me by name, told him that I could be of use to him socially; and so one day, when he met me in the street, he took me into his club and there and then unbosomed himself to me. He wanted to know—to be received by—his former lord, the Duke of Sutherland; and he also wanted to know, be presented to, the Prince of Wales. He said he was ready to pay well, and asked me what I would take. The Duke of Sutherland, of course, I did not mind, and I told Macdonald that I could easily manage that and he said he would give me £5,000. Splendid! Now as for the Prince of Wales, I told him I would not do it myself; but that I could no doubt get a friend to do it; but it would be dear as there would be two of us—the actual introducer and myself in the background. Fifteen thousand pounds was agreed on—I was going to Paris that night and the Duke was not in town, so the deal had to be postponed. I did not come back for some time and when I did the season

was over and London empty, but the Duke was in town and alone. So one morning early I went to Stafford House and found him at breakfast (it was the grandfather of the present Duke) at the top of the house with the dirtiest table cloth I have ever seen—one mass of stains and smears of butter and marmalade. I told him the whole story and he thought it very funny. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that there's any one who will pay £5,000 to be introduced to me? It's absolutely incredible!" But so it was; and the good-natured Duke said I could bring the man any morning that week, bring him at the hour I had come. We should find him at breakfast and he would be very cordial to my rugged protégé. There was no question of participation; I was to have the entire treasure to myself. I rushed to the Wanderers: Macdonald was in; I told him all: he was apparently delighted and an appointment was made for me to call for him the following morning and take him on to Stafford House. But when I called for him I found a letter apologizing, but saying he had been called up to Scotland to see a dying sister, and not knowing my address, could not let me know! So there was no five thousand for me; and I dedicated the man and his imaginary sister to the nether world, and resolved never to degrade myself again by trying to introduce crofters and peasants to Dukes and Princes. But I had told Dupplin about this man (it was he I was going to employ for the introduction to the Prince) and Duppy would not

let the thing drop; and not many months after the Sutherland fiasco (in the meanwhile, Macdonald had written me many letters of humble apology and explanation and protestation of good faith), the Prince of Wales happening to be in Paris (and as I knew, staying there for a week), Dupplin boldly told him the whole story (of course not mentioning my name, for secrecy about me was absolutely a *sine qua non*), and the Prince was greatly amused. He knew Duppy was hard up and that £15,000 could be of use to him; so he said if Dupplin would let him know two days before, he, the Prince, would come to Duppy's apartment in the Champs Elysées and have a cup of coffee after breakfast and allow the man to be presented to him. I wired to Macdonald; over he came; I put him up at Meurice's, introduced Dupplin; all was arranged for the next day but one; Dupplin went to the Bristol and told the Prince, and everything seemed all right. But on the morning of the day appointed, when I called at Meurice's to prepare the rough old crofter to meet his future Sovereign—another letter! He had left for London the night before: and he explained he felt he could not stand the ordeal! It was too great an honour! Luckily Dupplin and I were in time; we knew where the Prince was breakfasting, and Dupplin went on there and told him what had happened! I never spoke to that confounded Scot again—indeed, I never saw him again but once—and sent back all his letters unopened!

Poor Duppy's heart was nearly broken for a week. Luckily the Prince never had the slightest inkling I had anything to do with this wicked plot.

But I have wandered far away from the little entresol in the Rue de Rivoli of Mme. Bordeaux.

As I said, this genial laughing old lady who used to romp about her little salon with the giant Romanoff Princes (they were all big men, and it was a heartfelt grief and humiliation to poor Nicholas II that he was so small—a dwarf by the side of his father and uncles—and even cousins) as if they were all children together, had been for years at the Imperial Court as Curator—or should I say curatrix?—of the Imperial laces for the unhappy and neglected consort of that magnificently handsome giant (reputed to be the handsomest man in Europe) Alexander II; and she had a lot of amusing things to say about the Russian Court, not only that of Alexander II, but also of that of his father Nicholas I, for she had been with the Imperial family from her early childhood. I remember when I told her of a scene of hysterical bad temper on the part of the Duchess of Edinburgh I had been the very unwilling and really frightened witness of, a few days before, at the Hotel Bristol, she said: "No wonder. It's the way she was brought up." And then she gave me an example. One morning while she was talking to Alexander II, the Grand Duchess Marie—his only daughter and then about five—was making such an awful row in the next room that the

Emperor could not hear what Mme. Bordeaux had to tell him. He stood it for a long time, merely bawling out: "Tais toi, Marie! Tais toi!" But the noise continuing, he suddenly lost his temper, rushed into the next room, seized the child and began beating her violently: then suddenly stopped, fell on his knees before her, kissed her little hands and implored forgiveness with tears in his eyes! I myself never had the honour of knowing Alexander II (as I did all his sons and many of his cousins) but I knew him well by sight, of course, as everyone did when he came to Paris and London, and I remember how heartily he laughed at the Varietés one night (we had a box directly opposite his) when Hortense Schneider was playing La Grande Duchesse. And here again I must pause to make a slight digression, to note down, while it occurs to me, one of the many delightful traits in the character of King Edward—his unvarying care for, and attention to persons (men or women) who had ever been anything in his life; and who, for any reason—age, poverty, or what not—might not unreasonably have expected to be forgotten by one who had so much, and so many, in his everyday life to remember. I have already spoken of how he always said on arriving in Paris; "I want to see my old friend Brasseur. Send him to me,"—his old French tutor: and so with Hortense Schneider. He knew her in her heyday (what a beautiful back she had—a study for a sculptor!) when almost all the Princes of Europe were at her feet—the "Sabre

de mon père " days; and he never failed to go and see her in her pretty little house at the beginning of the Avenue du Bois, when age had crept over her. She said to me once, speaking of his unfailing politeness and attention to her in her autumnal days, " Voilà un vrai grand Seigneur par exemple! " And so, many years later with Sarah Bernhardt. There is a story told of him that I know to be true, for one who was present, Lord Marcus Beresford, repeated it to me, of how once, at a dinner party given to him, a lady was invited who, though now no longer young and become comparatively poor (I won't mention her name) had once, in her youth and beauty, counted for much in his life; how cordially he greeted her and how he made her sit next to him at table, saying with his delightful smile, " Why were you going to sit so far away? Don't you know your place is always by my side? " Not always so courteous and considerate are members of Royal Families; the kindness and delightful manners of the Duke of Connaught are well known; and the late Duke of Albany never failed to be polite, although rather with the politeness of a schoolboy. But the Duke of Edinburgh (most charming when he liked) could be, and I grieve to narrate, not unfrequently was, as rude and rough as an angry navvy. The rudeness (especially to ladies) of the late Don Carlos was proverbial; and the manners at times of the Duke of Orleans " leave to be desired " as the French say. I remember once at a ball in Paris the Marquis de

San Carlos (son, I think, of Christina, the sister of Isabella II) coming up to a lady who was sitting near me, and asking her to dance. When she very politely declined on the ground that she was tired, he stood still in front of her staring at her with great insolence, and then calmly said: "Madame, I'm afraid you've forgotten that when I ask you to dance with me I do you a great honour, while when you accept you merely give me pleasure!" *Vous me faites tout au plus un plaisir.* That was sheer insolence with no wit in it, but what the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia is reported to have said once to the Prince of Wales on the racecourse at Iffezheim about an old but still coquettish English peeress is really funny—"When I met——last night at dinner still as *décolletée* as ever, I was quite frightened; why she looked like a devastated Cathedral!" "How is that?" asked the Prince. "Like a Cathedral," continued the Grand Duke, "qui a perdu ses Saints (seins) mais qui en a gardé les niches." By the way, in these latter days when brusqueness, if not an absolute rudeness, is so much in vogue it is refreshing to remember that true politeness (and do not forget that "la politesse vient du cœur" as Vauvenarges truly says) is still to be found if one pauses and reflects. During the recent war at the house of a very popular peeress in London, the question was asked one day who had the best manners in England. A lot of different names were mentioned and I suggested the Grand Duke Michael, the father of Lady Zia Wernher,

and my nominee was acclaimed the winner *nem. con.* We are not (and I fear never shall be) conspicuous for our good manners, and that reminds me of the little known story of the old Duchesse de Duras and Montrond. The Duchesse asked the famous wit—"In your opinion, what animal the most closely resembles man?" Montrond reflected for a minute and then replied gravely, "L'Anglais, Duchesse."

Old Mme. Bordeaux had many interesting and amusing recollections of Nicholas I, the "Russian bear" of the Crimean War. He was literally speaking a giant (said to be half an inch taller than any man in his vast Empire) and (as one can see by all his portraits) very remarkably handsome. His subjects—even his nobility (although that upturned-nosed lunatic Paul said once to a Prince Galitzin, "Please understand that there's no man noble in my Empire except the man I happen to be speaking to; and he is only noble while I'm speaking to him") stood in awe of him and he generally spoke to persons outside his own family and the Corps Diplomatique in what the French call "la petite voix"—the little high-pitched, babyish caressing tone in which you invite a timid puppy to come near you. By the way, my expression "upturned-nosed" Paul may require an explanation for those who don't remember Petrograd in the old Empire days. The three crack regiments in those days were the Preobrajenskys, the Empress's Blue and Gold Guards, and the Pavlovskys. This last

regiment was founded by, and named after that madman, Paul; and every man in it and every officer had to have a nose pointing directly upwards like that Emperor—not an ordinary snub, but pointing right up and showing the nostrils. Parents in every class of life who wished their son to belong to this crack corps (whether, I repeat, as officer or private or drummer boy) had his nose broken into the required hideous shape in infancy. The effect of all these upturned noses at a Review was very curious. Nicholas was very fond of England (he founded the Cesarewitch), and was greatly astonished and shocked when we sided with the French and Turks against him in the Crimean War; but as he thought and said we were only a maritime power it did not seem to matter very much after all. But he did not know what our glorious soldiers could do; and was sadly mistaken in despising our splendid men as he was in relying on General February, or, indeed, as was the wretched ex-Kaiser in his appreciation of our "Contemptibles." Nicholas only had one daughter and he positively adored her—the Grand Duchess Catherine. Mme. Bordeaux said she was by far the most beautiful woman she had ever seen: her face (and this I know to be true from a miniature of her shown to me by Princess Helen Kotchoubey) being of the most pure classical type, and her figure, when undraped, absolutely perfect—that of a Venus, "especially her knees" old Bordeaux would always add and always much to my surprise—why *knees* so very specially? She

caused her adoring father great trouble, for with the classic mask of a Cornelia she had the disposition of a Messalina. One night when she was carousing with some common soldiers whom one of her equerries had brought to her apartments, the door suddenly opened and there, framed in the doorway, stood the Imperial giant, her father; the Autocrat of all the Russias, whose people, as I say, were so afraid of him that he addressed them in the "petite voix" you adopt in talking to a baby! They all fell on their knees, speechless, paralysed with fear. What became of the soldiers and the equerry was never known; they were never heard of again, and disappeared from the face of the earth (probably knouted and secretly hanged), but Nicholas exiled his daughter to Dresden. But he could not bear her absence for long; he loved her too dearly. She was soon back in Petersburg again, and I am afraid, did not reform. Nicholas (who, by the way and oddly enough, used to shave his forehead as a well-known peeress in this country does to-day) was a cruel man; and when young Prince Sangusko (well-known and a great favourite both in London and Paris society, and a member of one of the most noble of all noble families of Russia) was found to be mixed up in a conspiracy and was sentenced to Siberia for life, and Dmitry Orloff asked his Imperial Majesty how the young Prince should go there, the Czar made this terrible reply, "On foot, and in chains!"—nearly a year's journey.

A member of this old Russian Court I knew very

well, Prince Peter of Oldenburg, and in the course of time, and meeting every season at Vichy, we became very intimate, although he was old enough to be my grandfather. He was a grim looking old man, with a large wen on his forehead on which his hat used to rest. He was enormously rich, but he lived very simply and gave away most of his enormous wealth in charities. His great hobby was "Peace" and he used to deluge every Court of Europe at least once a year with a silly pamphlet he had written on the subject. He gave me one and begged me to give it to the Prince of Wales! Of course, I put it in the fire. It was the same silly idea of universal disarmament that some idiotic faddists are advocating to-day—a fallacy and not only a fallacy but a wicked fallacy to boot; for every student of humanity knows that so long as man is man he will fight—fight something or somebody. It is in our blood and nothing but a complete transformation of our nature brought about by Divine influence—Heaven, not Downing Street—nor the Quai d'Orsay, nor the Wilhelmstrasse—can ever make abiding peace a reality in this planet. Besides, though war is, of course, terrible and hellish, it is glorious; and gives the needed tonic without which men would become effete and eventually lose all true virility and courage, while self-sacrifice and heroism become but names and phantasies. I once led old Prince Peter astray—absolutely upset, for the time being, his moral applecart. The races at Vichy are where young horses are being tried in

public for the first time, so if there happens to be any youngster of great promise running, his form being quite unknown to the general public, you can get a private tip really worth having, if you have any influence and know how to go about it. Prince Peter was dead against racing (it is said, but I cannot vouch for the truth of it, that he wrote a long and strong letter to Queen Victoria urging her to keep all the members of her family from patronizing the Turf) and year after year I tried in vain at Vichy to get him to go with me to the Annual Meeting. At last one day he consented (why, I don't remember and cannot imagine) and we drove across the Allier and on to the course in a shabby old landau he had hired, and which nearly broke down on our return journey. When we got on the course he would not alight, or even condescend to see anything; he would just sit still there with his spectacled old *aide-de-camp* or equerry and wait for me. So off I went; soon got a good tip, and came back to the Prince—I told him the horse; showed him the quoted price and the 500 franc note I was going to risk. He was interested, but not excited; but when I came back with the money (I remember I got 20 to 1) it was a very different thing! He could not believe it! What, four hundred pounds for twenty, and all done in twenty minutes? Impossible. But there were the notes and he had seen my note before the race. Then I left him again and put £100 on another privately recommended runner at 8 to 1. Again success! The poor old peace-loving

millionaire was as excited as a schoolboy; and then (no doubt the Devil prompting me) I told the Prince I should put a 500 franc note on for him; and I left the carriage before he could forbid me to do so. The horse was only 2 to 1, but when I returned and made His Highness a present of a thousand francs he was delighted beyond measure. I dined with him that night to meet the Prefect of the Department and a lot of stupid French officials, but nothing was said, of course, about our behaviour of the afternoon.

But talking of bets and tips, I had a tip once to back a horse and in such peculiar circumstances that it was impossible for me to lose my stake, no matter what might happen. This may seem at first sight almost impossible, but it is true and this is how it was. It was at one of the old meetings at La Marche, now discontinued. I drove out there alone, plunged, lost: went on plunging and went on losing; and so at last, greatly disgusted and naturally not in the best of tempers, I made up my mind to return to Paris before the last race and gave my servant orders to put the horses back and get ready. Just at that moment a former groom of mine came up, a very nice lad named Robert Careless, whom I had taken from the Marquis de Contades (he used to look very smart in the Marquis's livery perched up behind his master's private hansom, the only one then in Paris), waiting for him by the door of the Jockey Club in the Rue Scribe. Bob was a very clever and most gentlemanly lad, and as he was

engaged to be married and ambitious to get on, I felt that my small establishment was not giving him the proper chance, so I recommended him to Jim Bennett (Gordon Bennett) and he took him. Bob was very unwilling to leave me, but as I insisted, he had to go, and ere long with Gordon Bennett he got so well in the swim that he was able to marry and in the course of time eventually made enough money to retire and return to England, where he died a rich and prosperous farmer only a year before the War. In the circumstances, therefore, Bob was ready to do me a good turn if he could. So when he came up to me that afternoon at La Marche and asked me how I'd been getting on, and I told him of my bad luck, he broke into a grin and said, "I'm going to give you a tip!" Here I interrupted him and I fear my language was sulphuric——What the devil did he mean by his d——d cheek? Was he drunk? Did he forget who he was speaking to? Did he take me for a child? Give me a tip? Tips be d——d! A tip from him, indeed! To Hades with his tips! Bob laughed. "Don't be angry. Of course, I know as well as you do that most tips are all rot; but this one is a positive cert, and you can see that I know what I'm talking about before you risk a bob. See, there are twelve horses in this last race, and they're betting on all of them. Well, only two will run—Eventail and Mantille II." How well I remember the names! "Back Mantille II: it's sure to win; but even if it doesn't, it makes no difference for *Eventail is going to be disqualified!*"

Even as he spoke up went the names of the runners: he was quite right, only two, and the two he had named. I went at once and followed Bob's advice, putting a considerable sum on on the nod and (as prices were, of course, very short) borrowing £500 ready from Bob Hennessy. My horse Mantille II did *not* win (beaten by a head); but Careless was right, Eventail the winner was disqualified, and so I only had to wait about a week for my money! What a tip! Needless to say Bob had no occasion to regret his kindness to his former master.

I remember telling Captain Machell about this, and he said that, extraordinary and very unusual as such things are, he knew of an exactly similar case at Stockbridge many years before that, which enabled Lord Chaplin to pocket not a few thousands. A " gamble " where there is no possible risk is not an everyday occurrence.

CHAPTER X

The Empress Eugénie. "The splendour of a spirit without blame." Mrs. Gladstone. The late Duke of Devonshire. Marvellous lack of tact in very clever man. Abraham Lincoln's witty lesson to him. Sam Lewis and Lord Hartington. "Boy" at Pratt's. Shocking clothes. Why Disraeli's clothes never fitted him.

NO historical character within the last seventy odd years has been more misunderstood, and more falsely presented to the public than the Empress Eugénie. She has been described as proud, haughty, cruel, passionate. Nothing could possibly be more remote from the truth. She was absolutely simple and unaffected, and as frankly impulsive as a happy English schoolgirl, as, indeed, she once was, when running about the garden of the school at Clifton with her golden-red hair hanging down her back, calling out and laughing and clapping her hands. She was absolutely natural, and the restrictions imposed by Court etiquette were very galling to her; in fact, in many instances—as for example, the wearing of gloves—she positively refused to obey the rules, kicked over the traces, and did as her very exquisite good taste prompted her to do. The Court ceremonies bored her to extinction; and she was never so happy as when, alone with friends like Pauline

Metternich, Melanie de Pourtalès, and others, she could for the nonce forget she was an Empress and act with all the spontaneous merriment and innocent gaiety which was her real nature, notwithstanding the somewhat sad expression that her drooping eyelids gave to her face when in repose, and which, therefore, is noticeable in her portraits. But beautiful as her face was (and, of course, it was purely and simply her loveliness that won her the throne; for she, although of noble birth, was far from being an heiress; and the reputation of the mother very greatly militated against the chances of the daughters making good matches; and Louis Napoleon felt that, to aid him in his ambitious dreams, it was essential he should marry a lady of Royal blood), and lovely as I say her face was, it was more than matched by her most extraordinary, really marvellous, grace. I have never seen a woman walk as she walked, and I have seen many walk and with wonderful grace. But the walk of the Empress (not the *ex*-Empress, for the last plebiscite that had confirmed the Emperor to the throne was never legally cancelled; and the *déchéance* was as illegal and arbitrary as the *coup d'état* had been) was something quite *à part:* something quite unique. It cannot be described: there was no swimming or gliding about it—she simply moved before you. And this most extraordinary grace of gait she never wholly lost, even when old, and carrying a stick to support herself. The last time I saw her was at the door of Drummond's

Bank near Trafalgar Square, when she smilingly told me not to remain uncovered; and then, when having asked me about my health and why I never came to see her, she passed on to her carriage, leaning on her stick, I saw the sad shadow of the wondrous grace of the old days. Peace be with her. A vision of loveliness, with the sweet, tender impulses of a true woman—as evidenced when she went from her palace at midnight to nurse her kinsman, the dying Duke of Hamilton, at his hotel, and sat by him to the end; and again, when she, then at the very zenith of her beauty and power, risking her life, went to nurse the poor patients at the hospitals during the terrible epidemic of cholera in Paris—she lived to see the utter hollowness of all things human: the treachery and ingratitude of those who owed her all—Bazaine, Trochu, Victorien Sardou—and bitterly expiated in the loss of throne, husband, and only child any mistake in judgment she may have made with regard to the war that resulted in the shipwreck of her life. She never forgot a kindness and always went out of her way to recognize it. At the time of the death of the Prince Imperial, a man I knew wrote an article in the *Pays* called "Le Prince Martyre," and as I had just lent him *Atalanta in Calydon,* by my friend, the jerky red-haired little inspired manikin, Swinburne, he quoted the fine line:

"The splendour of a spirit without blame."

(By the way, I once asked the jumpy little bard

what special spirit that was and he shrieked—twisting his hands and bobbing up and down on his chair —"How can you ask? You *must* know of course —Martell!") Well, very many years later, in fact only about twenty years ago, hearing that the Empress had been passing a week with one of her former ladies-in-waiting and an old friend of mine (she is with the Empress in that beautiful and well-known picture by Winterhalter of Her Majesty surrounded by her ladies—a group of very lovely women), Madame de Sancy-Parabère, I drove over from Chantilly to Boran to ask what the Empress had had to say and how she was looking. Madame de Sancy told me all I wanted to know, and then said: "By the way, do you know any journalists in Paris? Can you tell the name of the man who wrote an article in the *Pays* at the time of the poor Prince's death, called 'Le Prince Martyre'? The Empress said it touched her more than any other, and she never could find out who wrote it." I gave Madame de Sancy the name and address of the man, which she, the Countess, sent to the Empress saying it was I who had given it to her. The result was a kind message of thanks to me through Madame de Sancy and a most beautiful letter to the man who had written the article a quarter of a century before! This kind thoughtfulness for others was, indeed, one of the many traits she had in common with the Prince of Wales, and made them always such true and good friends. I have heard him on more than one occasion speak of her in the most touching manner.

But speaking of the Prince of Wales and his tender sympathy and care for all who were in sorrow, and his exquisite tact in expressing that sympathy, leads one naturally to think of the incident of his stooping and reverently kissing the hand of Mrs. Gladstone as she stood in her great sorrow by the grave of her illustrious husband at the funeral in Westminster Abbey. I think that there can be no doubt that Mrs. Gladstone—"Aunt Pussy," as she was lovingly called by her near relations—may safely be taken as the most perfect type of an English lady that the nineteenth century can show us. I, to my great regret, only knew her but slightly and when she was no longer young; but the late Colonel North (of course, I don't refer to that nitrate so-called "King," but to that very delightful gentleman Sidney Doyle, who married that equally delightful little peeress in her own right, Lady North, and took her name, and with her dispensed such splendid hospitality at their place, Wroxton, near Banbury, father of the present peer) told me that Mrs. Gladstone and her sister, Lady Lyttelton, were the toasts of Chester and famous for their beauty in the old days, which I can well believe and which accounts for the great good looks of all the children of the two sisters. She was beautiful when I knew her—beautiful in the late autumn of her life; but that was as nothing compared to her charm of manner, delightfulness of disposition, and the noble qualities of her tender heart. I have heard, from persons well acquainted with the fact, of this sweet

refined lady dressing herself shabbily and going out at night to talk to, and help (never, of course, in a patronizing way) the poor girls walking Piccadilly: cheering them, sympathizing with them in their utter desolation, made all the more pitiful by the powder, paint and smiles with which they strove to hide it. I could tell many tales of the almost countless acts of Christian love performed by stealth (and in many cases even unknown to the Grand Old Man) by this —in the highest and best sense of the term—*grande dame;* but as they did not come within my personal knowledge and as they are almost too sacred to find place in a book of gossip, I will say nothing. But I repeat that as a perfect type of sweet, pure, tender, refined, loving English womanhood, Mrs. Gladstone stands unrivalled; and it was knowing this, that the Prince so reverently kissed her hand in the Abbey.

Speaking of persons gifted with tact reminds one of people devoid of that precious endowment, and of those last, I think, to the late Duke of Devonshire, so far as my experience goes, the palm most assuredly must be awarded. Never did man of birth and breeding stand so sadly in need of remembering the old lines:

> "If you your lips would keep from slips
> Five things observe with care:
> Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
> And how, and when, and where."

He was forever not only "putting his foot" in it, but both feet, and at times most of his big, awkward body. When he joined the Cabinet,

everyone who knew him as well as I did expected trouble in Downing Street; and his verbal *gaucheries* were a source of unfailing delight to Disraeli. I shall never forget a terrible instance of this when I went with him (Hartington he was then) in Paris to breakfast with a well-known banker whose first wife's misconduct had been notorious and who had finally run away with a groom. After breakfast the Baron showed us his collection of pictures and works of arts, and among these was the bust—half length down to the waist—of a Bacchante—a mænad; a young woman quite undraped, with passion-maddened eyes—the kind of thing Carpeaux had done in his famous groups in the Grand Opera House in Paris. The Baron was very pleased with this work of art; and having pointed out to us its various beauties (it was by some Russian sculptor I think), said to Lord Hartington: "Isn't it beautiful?" "It is, indeed," assented his Lordship, and then turning to me said very calmly: "The first Madame ——, I suppose!" He really and truly thought that this was a portrait bust of the unhappy financier's first and erring wife; but even thinking anything so ridiculous, why say it, and say it in the presence of the husband?

But from his school days the late Duke was famous for this kind of thing, and the only person who ever wittily rapped him over the knuckles was Abraham Lincoln; the curious instance of a rough Yankee getting very distinctly the better of the head of one of the great ducal houses of England.

Hartington arrived in New York in the early months of the Civil War, and although, of course, in a Northern town made no kind of attempt to hide his ardent sympathy with the Southern cause. At a masked ball given in his honour by the Belmonts, he allowed someone to pin a Secession badge to his domino as he went up the stairs—but this Charlie Hecksher tore off. Imagine a neutral—say a Swede—during the late war going to a London drawing-room with a German badge on his coat, and openly avowing his sympathy for the Kaiser! Then when he had completed his visit to New York and Mr. John Jay asked him where he was going next, he airily replied—"Well, I suppose now it's time I went and paid my respects to the President of the Broken Bubble!" When the Secretary of State, Seward, heard of this remark, he asked Lincoln if he intended to receive such a man. "Well," drawled Lincoln with a twinkle in his eyes, "I don't know so much about Lord Hartington: but I guess I shan't object much to receiving Lord Partington if he comes along." Partington—Mrs. Partington—is the American equivalent to our Mrs. Malaprop. The Marquis when he heard the joke of "Uncle Abe" was vastly delighted. I often used to wonder if these terrible *lapsus linguæ* were the result of studied insolence, or of simple carelessness for the feelings of others—for they were obviously not the outcome of stupidity, since the man was very clever. But I came at last to the conclusion that neither of these was the cause. The

real reason of this painful habit of so often saying the wrong thing lay in the fact that the moment his mind grasped a thing he spoke at once and before pausing to consider what he was about to say—an excess of frankness and honesty as it were. I remember once when the late Lord Sefton, the father of the late and present peer, asked him to do something—I forget now what it was—he said: "What a damned bore!" and then immediately "With pleasure, my dear chap!" And what added to the absurdity of these awkward remarks was that poor Hartington always spoke in the "Haw hawy" tone of the "swell" in *Punch,* a very comic mode of speech acquired, Lord only knows where, and the reverse of indicative of the character of the man, for the late Duke was the most unassuming of individuals. I only knew one other man of breeding and refinement who had the "Haw haw" tone—the late Duke of Atholl; but then as "Angus" (himself the Premier Duke of Scotland) used to say "Poor chap! He can never forget he's Atholl!" It is said that when this chief of the Murrays, having lost his first wife (Louisa, one of the beautiful Moncreiffe sisters), asked the widow of a Chicago millionaire (then living in Green Street) to become his Duchess and was refused, the lady said to the late Lady (Arthur) Paget—"You know, Minnie, I couldn't really see myself married to a man who must wear his coronet in bed!"

Sam Lewis, the Cork Street money-lender, used to tell a funny story about Hartington. His Lord-

ship plaintively announced at Pratt's one evening that he wanted ten thousand pounds at once and didn't know where the devil to get it. "Go to Sam Lewis" advised some one—Hartington called him "a boy," but Sam would never divulge who the "boy" was. The Marquis and the "boy" had some further talk and the result was that the following morning Hartington presented himself in Cork Street, where he was received with all due honour by the urbane Gilbey, who at once ushered him into the presence of plump, clever little Sam, who was, by the way, very amusing when he told this yarn, for he imitated the "haw-haw" tone of Lord Hartington to perfection. "Good-morning, my Lord, pray take a chair. What can I have the pleasure of doing for your Lordship?" Hartington (who, by the way, was a remarkably timid man) hesitated and then said: "Well ar—Mr. Lewis—ar—you're really very kind—ar, but—ar—I—ar—almost feel as if I—ar—were intruding—ar——" "Not at all, my Lord, believe me I'm greatly honoured by your visit. In what way can I oblige you?" "Well—ar—the truth is—ar—I happened yesterday—ar—at Pratt's to mention I wanted a little money and—ar—a boy there—ar—said—ar —'Go to Sam Lewis.'" "Clever boy, that, my Lord, he knew what he was about. Might I ask your Lordship to give me his name?" "Oh! Ah! Why—ar—his name?" "Merely to write and thank him," said Sam with a smile. So the name was given (and the "boy" got a nice cheque) and the

noble Marquis said what he wanted, "I—ar—I wanted it at once, to—ar—send to a lady at Monte Carlo who—ar—has been—ar—having bad luck at the tables," and Sam (of course delighted to get such a prize as a leading statesman and eldest son of a very rich Duke) wrote out a cheque at once and handed it to his new client. "But—ar—don't I—ar—sign—ar—some kind of paper—ar, Mr. Lewis, for this?" "No, my Lord; your Lordship's endorsement of my cheque is quite enough. Shall my clerk slip across the street to the bank and get you the money at once?" Then when Gilbey had gone opposite to get the cash, Lord Hartington timidly asked—"But—ar—Mr. Lewis—ar—when do you—ar—want this money back, and—ar—what—ar—do you—ar—wish me—ar—to pay for so—ar—kindly obliging me?" Sam, who knew the world and its ways backwards, offered the Marquis one of his enormous cigars, lit one himself and then said in the soft breezy tone he always assumed when he wanted to be specially pleasing. "Pay it back whenever it's convenient to yourself, my Lord; I'm not in want of it just at present. As for my profit in the deal, I'll leave that to your Lordship. It should, I think, entirely depend upon how useful the money happens to be to you just at this moment. If it's not of much use—merely an ordinary convenience—pay me no interest for it at all: if it's really of use to you just now, tack 5 per cent. on it and I shall be still in your debt for the honour you've done me by allowing me to be of service to you!" Clever

Sam! He knew his man. He got his money back almost at once, and Lord Hartington went about London singing Sam's praises and thus brought a crowd to Cork Street that never would have found its way there otherwise—the result to Sam being the raking in of not a few shekels—for he did not by any means usually charge 5 per cent. for the honour of your visit!

After his awful *gaucheries* in speech, the next worst thing about the late Duke of Devonshire was his clothes—his tailors ought to have been crucified. It is not that they were shabby—quite the reverse—they were always bran new—painfully new almost; but they were made, cut—*oh la! la! en depit du bon sens!* I remember once walking down St. James's Street behind him—I had a rather dandified little Frenchman with me (the Marquis had just slipped out of Brooks's and hadn't seen me) and he said, "Who is that man with the absurd coat?" And absurd coat it was—a morning coat, the tails of which (incredible but true) made no attempt to close behind but swung, as he walked, stretched far apart, disclosing a light lemon-coloured posterior; for the trousers were of a tone to make a dog bark! Equally ridiculous in his dress was the great Disraeli and I very advisably call him great—but of course, I am only speaking of him in his old age—1871—for I naturally never saw him in his splendid, dandy, "green velvet trousers" days. But the cause of this I got to know. For a time I had the same tailor, a man named Jackson in Cork Street,

and when I asked him how it was he made his illustrious patron such ill-fitting clothes, he said: "It isn't our fault; we can't help it. Lady Beaconsfield always receives me alone; chooses herself the material and colours; then calls Mr. Disraeli in, who never opens his lips, and goes out the moment we've taken his measurements; and then when he's gone Lady Beaconsfield always impresses on us not to pay any attention to the way Mr. Disraeli stoops, as, she says, he doesn't always stoop, but to make the coat as if for a young man who stands upright! No wonder the clothes don't fit him."

CHAPTER XI

Edward, Earl of Derby. Courting at Hatfield. Introduction to Disraeli. "The disappointed are always young." The extraordinary career of Disraeli. My birthday at the Foreign Office. Lord Hammond gets his peerage by a blunder. My last sight of Lord Beaconsfield. "Darling Spencer." "Bonne nuit, et dormez bien." The indifference of King Edward to Lord Beaconsfield. Lothair and Lord Bristol. Queen Victoria and Lord Beaconsfield. Her Majesty's affection for late Duke of Fife. Macduff. The Reel. Strange evening at Horace Farquhar's (late Lord Farquhar). Julius Beerbohm. Lord Fife and Queen Victoria. Sir Claude Scott. Lady Albert Clinton. Lord Henry Paget. My influence. The present Lord Anglesey owes his life to me. My mistake at General Van Alen's dinner. Sir William Gordon-Cumming. The dinner at Charley Buller's. "Hard, as in—beggar."

I CAME to know Disraeli in the following way. The late Lord Derby but one, Edward (son of "the impetuous Earl, the Rupert of Debate," as Bulwer Lytton called him in the *New Timon*), was a very old friend of my father and mother; and so when I came to school in England, he went out of his way to be kind to me in every way; and his big house at the corner of Charles Street and St. James's Square was almost like my home. I remember well when the extra story had to be added on, because when he married the Dowager Lady Salisbury and she came with a lot of her belongings there was not room enough. By the way, one of the Bal-

fours (not Arthur) told me that the middle-aged Lord Derby (my friend) and the middle-aged Lady Salisbury used to be heard, at the end of that beautiful long gallery at Hatfield, during their engagement, kissing and whispering and giggling as if they were neither of them out of their teens. Well, as I always had a passionate admiration for Disraeli (I think I knew *Coningsby* almost by heart when I was twelve) Lord Derby got me up from school one day on purpose to take me to see my idol at Grosvenor Gate. Of course, I was a little disappointed; one should never come too close to one's idol. I was quite prepared for the extreme and utterly dismal gloom of his well-known face, and his theatrical manners, but he was very nice to me (not a bit patronizing), for Lord Derby had told him I was a worshipper at his shrine and no man (except perhaps Victor Hugo) liked flattery (put on hot and thick) better than Disraeli. He talked to me (much, of course, to my delight) as if I were a man of the world, asking me, for instance, if I thought the influence of Gambetta over the French nation would be lasting. Whether or no his breath was offensive, as Lady Cardigan has stated in her memoirs, I cannot say, for on all the occasions I was with him from 1871 up to a few weeks before his death, he was always deluged in scent—positively reeking with it. He made, I remember, one very Disraelian remark on the occasion of that first visit to him (it was made to Lord Derby and not to me and I don't remember what it was about: but he was looking at

me fixedly when he said it): "The disappointed are always young." How I treasured that remark! and what a little ass I made of myself when I got back to school, swaggering and saying in a very superior tone of voice: "As Dizzy said to me the other day —'the disappointed are always young.'" Now I have kept it in my mind ever since and how marvellously, almost superhumanly, true I have found it to be! I have, as a matter of fact, often wondered if Lord Beaconsfield, with his Semitic ancestry (he was a pure Sephardim Jew), sphinx-like face, marvellous career—a Jew lad, a solicitor's clerk, with no money or influence and not much education, absolutely a foreigner in the most conservative country in Europe, becoming Prime Minister and giving himself a peerage and the Garter!—was not from time to time possessed of some mystical spirit of divination: some special power to read the future, or men's thoughts, as that with which (to some slight degree) Home the Medium and (to a very great degree) that marvellous man Edmond (of whom I shall speak on some future occasion) were endowed. Those words "The disappointed are always young" that, when spoken, I thought framed but a quick flash of cynical wit, I have found to embody a deep truth, one indicating an almost uncanny knowledge of the hearts and ways of men. When I have watched him at a dinner table, it has seemed to me sometimes as if I could almost *see* him taking counsel from some spirit friend. Even now I can hardly bring myself to believe Disraeli

was merely human, just ordinary flesh and blood. Apart from his appearance and personality, which were unique, his career is really without a parallel in modern times. The great Napoleon was helped by the Revolution (when some courtier was trying to lick the boots of "Plon Plon's" beautiful sister, Princess Mathilde, at her salon in the Rue de Berri, and began running down the Revolution, she stopped him laughingly and said, "Please don't speak ill of the Revolution! Remember that but for the Revolution I should probably be selling oranges now in the streets of Ajaccio!"); but there was nothing to help Disraeli but his own power, or power from some mystic source. He had everything against him; his nationality, the calling to which he was articled, his appearance, his lack of public school training, his utter ignorance of all kinds of manly exercises and sports, his want of means, his ignorance of the ways and customs of society, and yet he very distinctly "got there," and nevertheless, and notwithstanding all that he was in himself very certainly *not* a man of genius. When he wrote *The Young Duke* and the several social blunders in it were brought to the notice of his father, old Isaac said with a grin—"Duke! Why, God bless him! Ben's never seen a duke!" "Ben" lived to make Dukes and bestow Garters. When Lord Derby (the Rupert of Debate, my friend's father) was asked concerning a certain sitting of the Privy Council if Mr. Charles Greville was the Clerk in attendance, he replied, "How the devil

should I know? When I ring for coals to be put on the fire do you suppose I notice whether it's William or John who comes?" That's the type of man the poor Jew solicitor boy came to lead and govern! And oddly enough, Disraeli, despite all his absence of breeding and the usual bringing up of a gentleman, and with all his absurd artificialities and theatrical tricks, was most unquestionably a gentleman; which is more than can be said of many of the statesmen of his (and our present) time, certainly, for example, not of Palmerston who, when Brummell, Consul at Caen, very honestly and truly said he thought a consulate there was needless, abolished it, and never gave the poor dandy another berth, but let him die in want and penury tended only by Sisters of Charity. Disraeli would never have been guilty of such heartless neglect. He was kind, generous and grateful; and it is what our American cousins call a "hoary chestnut" how when the then rudest man in England (I have named Bernal Osborne) said to him—"I've been looking at your wife, Ben, and I can't for the life of me understand what sentiment she can possibly inspire you with"; he replied—"A sentiment quite foreign to your nature, Bernal; Gratitude!"

I remember when the Liberals went out and the Tories came in ('71, I think) I was staying at the Derbys. There was to be an official but semi-private reception at the Foreign Office and Lady Derby and Disraeli were to receive together—Lord Derby being unwell. Disraeli (and, I think, Alger-

non Turnor) dined with us, and they all went down together in a carriage (Dizzy, Turnor and Lady Derby), I following in a hansom. When I got to the Foreign Office, my name was called out to the friends I had only left a few minutes before, just after that of "'Is Grace and Hexcellency the Dook of Selldinner"—the Very Magnificent Saldanha—had been announced. "Where did Granville pick up that awful man, I wonder," said Disraeli to me, referring to the coarse, cockney voice and absence of aspirates. I stood behind Disraeli and Lady Derby for some few minutes, watching the different ways he bowed to different people—a profound obeisance to a Royal Highness; a pleasant bow to the ordinary friend or acquaintance, but a little nod that was almost insolent to a man, duke or commoner, whom he did not like. Then I moved on, bored to death, for I hardly knew anybody there (so bored and thoughtless, indeed, that I almost made a sad blunder by preparing to sit down on the same sofa as the Duke of Cambridge, and only saved myself just in time!) when suddenly, while I was standing by a fireplace talking to that handsome old *grand seigneur,* Lord Granville, the clock near us very softly and daintily struck twelve. It was now my birthday! "I wonder, my Lord," I said to Lord Granville, "if there's anyone else in the room just a year older now than he was a minute ago." "What do you mean?" asked the ex-Foreign Secretary. Then I told him, and received his kind congratulations and good

wishes. A few minutes later I told Kenneth Howard. "Oh, do tell the Chief," he said. "You really must. Let me come too. I shan't be noticed and must hear what he'll say!" So off we went and found Dizzy, who was talking to a man who was just leaving him. I broke in at once—for there were lots of people waiting to speak to him. "How time flies, Sir. I'm a year older now than when last I had the pleasure of speaking to you." "A year older! How? I don't understand!" Then I explained. Disraeli held out both hands—a thing I never saw him do before or since—and said with the most sincere but stately cordiality, "My very dear young friend, let me congratulate you. I hope I shall have the pleasure of congratulating you on many future happy birthdays!" Kenneth Howard, who was lurking within earshot, was, or pretended to be, somewhat disappointed; he expected, he said, something far more florid and oriental.

By the way, I may mention, *currente calamo,* that Lord Hammond got his peerage by a mistake. Dizzy told Turnor (or, perhaps, Jim Daly, which would account for the blunder) to write to the Permanent Under Secretary (who at that time was abroad) and offer him a *baronetcy.* This word by a slip of the pen reached Hammond at Pisa, as "barony." He, not a little astonished, accepted it; and then, of course, it was too late to rectify the mistake that, as Dizzy said, didn't much matter as there was no heir.

The last time I saw Lord Beaconsfield to speak to was in the street—Piccadilly, near Clarges Street. I had only come over from Paris that morning and had been dining at the Raleigh with a very rowdy, tipsy lot—I remember one of them threw a wild duck into the middle of the room exclaiming: "Do you call that d——d thing cooked?" and there was a great uproar. Going home (I was staying with friends in Knightsbridge) I saw just ahead of me in the moonlight a familiar figure, leaning on the arm of "My darling Spencer" as he called the charming owner of beautiful Althorp—he had the most ridiculous way of calling bearded friends of his "darling" and "dearest"—he never honoured me, however, with anything warmer than "my very dear." I passed them, and then, half turning, bowed and passed on. But something seemed to tell me to linger: that I might, if I waited, soon have Dizzy to myself. So I lingered; hovered about like a garotter waiting for a throat worth throttling. I was right, they stopped; Lord Spencer was saying good-bye. So I came up. Disraeli looked very tired, I can't say old, for he always looked very old; but he was certainly ill, and weak. He asked about Paris, and then he said, "Well, now I must go. I'm very tired. *Bonne nuit et dormez bien!*" He pronounced French vilely, but in these last words to me there was no chance of great mispronunciation. So I replied, "Thank you, my lord. Good-night. Good-night!" and uncovered as he turned away. I watched him

slowly go up to the street in which he died, Curzon Street—and never saw him again—indeed, he died within a month. He died a Jew, I am told, and as on his deathbed he held the hand of his solicitor and friend, Rose, he murmured to himself—"There is—one God—of Israel!" Personally, I don't think there are many really converted Jews. Adolph Saphir, of course, was one. As a rule they are, I am afraid, only nominally converted and for some worldly reason—as Baür, when he had had his last kiss, returned to the Synagogue: as Disraeli, leaving his Earldom and Garter, turned back to Sinai.

A very odd thing I always thought was that the Queen should have been so fond of Disraeli, and equally odd that the Prince of Wales (and this to my certain knowledge) should not have had much liking for him. Dizzy always, in and out of office, furthered the Prince's interests (and at one time but for him there would have been a very serious financial crisis in the affairs of the Heir Apparent); Dizzy was, of course, lavish in limelight such as the Prince was far from averse to; and finally Dizzy belonged to a race on which at all times the Prince lavished his benevolent countenance and favours. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the Prince was never a great admirer of Lord Beaconsfield. He used to chaff me about my Dizzy-cult (although once when I fired off my "disappointed are always young" at him he was greatly impressed and admitted its truth); and I remember

when he found me waiting for him in the entresol at the Bristol (according to the instructions he had left—he was breakfasting with Mme. Hervey de St. Denis) and reading a Tauchnitz book I had picked up from the table, "*Lothair,*" he said, "What's that? Oh, damned trash! It isn't mine!"

Speaking of *Lothair,* it is an odd thing that the original, Lord Bute, was hardly known to Disraeli when he wrote the novel. He got all his information from the late Lord Bristol (who told me this himself) who, never thinking for a moment, of course, that he was being "pumped" as it were, and with a view to embodying what he said in a romance, spoke very openly to Dizzy. He was exceedingly angry when he read *Lothair,* and I believe made some caustic remarks to Lord Beaconsfield on the subject in a letter—but of this last I am not sure. That the Queen should have liked him is odd, for she certainly did not care for Jews; and, of course, all the tales about her liking him because he flattered her—letting her think she was giving orders when really she was only saying what he had inspired her to say: and the Empress of India business and all that—are sheer nonsense. Everyone flattered her and as a matter of fact, she did not like flattery and was averse at first to the Empress of India idea. She was a very clever, clear headed little business woman, who hated theatrical artifices and effects and (while her health lasted) took a direct and very dominant part in the governing of her vast Empire. Lord Derby told me that

not a single paper of any importance ever left the Foreign Office till it had been submitted to her and that corrections were of common occurrence; and sometimes, indeed, the Royal pen was drawn ruthlessly across a whole page at a time. She disliked Gladstone because his manners (when he had a serious matter in hand) were certainly very bad, far too domineering and *tranchant:* but why she liked Disraeli (for she certainly *did* like him) is, and must remain, a mystery. I have asked many persons, men and women, who were honoured by intimate relations with her Majesty, but no one has ever been able to hazard even a likely hypothesis, and all have been as much astonished as myself by the undoubted fact. But then after all it may truly, though of course, respectfully, be said that there was no accounting for not a few of her Majesty's likes and dislikes. Why, for example, did she so tenderly love Macduff, the late Duke of Fife? I use the "tenderly love" advisedly, for I have been assured by one very close to the Queen that she did, indeed, tenderly love him—that with the exception of Prince Leopold, there was not one of her sons (I say nothing, of course, of the Princesses) to whom she was more fondly attached. And yet very certainly his best friend would not dare assert there was anything specially lovable in Macduff. He was essentially a coarse man, extraordinarily selfish and utterly contemptuous of the feelings of others—this is, of course, if they could be of no service to him. I knew him very well, and know what I am talking

about. His language to his sisters was Billingsgate at high tide, and to his inferiors, he rivalled even Randolph Churchill in his coarseness. It was my misfortune once to be in the room when a tailor came to try on some clothes, and the way he spoke to that unfortunate man—telling him he smelt like a polecat—"Don't put your d—d filthy paws so near my face," etc.—was pitiful. He could be amusing at times; was always particularly nice to me, and so I rather liked him—or rather did not dislike him; but that he was not a lovable man is a fact which, I think, no one who knew him well can dispute. But the Queen certainly loved him; he could do positively anything he liked with her. Once at a servants' ball at Balmoral, while he was standing by her Majesty looking on (wearing, of course, the tartan he had no right to wear, and knew he had no right to wear, for, as all conversant with Scottish family history are well aware, he was descended from a petty attorney and no more connected with the noble Duffs than I am connected with the Pope) Macduff coolly suggested they should dance a reel together! Her Majesty, after a moment's hesitation, consented, retired, and reappeared in a few minutes wearing—poor old lady—a short skirt. They danced together, but Macduff (doubtless invigorated by his well-loved alcohol) chose the kind of reel usually danced by sweethearts—hands locked across the bosom; and danced it in rather an improper way. Of course, the innocent old Royal lady in the short skirt knew nothing of this,

and equally, of course, nobody dared tell her; indeed if they had they would probably not have been believed—for she would never listen to anything anybody ever dared say to her against Macduff. I remember once, when he and Horace Farquhar (afterwards Lord Farquhar) and then one of the handsomest and most charming men in London (he has, alas, crossed the Stygian stream!) were living together near Berkeley Square, a few doors from the St. James's (now Berkeley Hotel) a very curious and wholly undescribable scene in which Julius Beerbohm was the central figure, and I wonder what the Queen would have thought of her beloved Macduff could she but have seen him then! That was the night when, driving home, Lord Dupplin ran over a man and there was the devil to pay. It was not a prayer meeting by any means!

Julius Beerbohm, by the way, was a curious character. The second son (Herbert Tree was the eldest and Max the youngest) of a big man on the Corn Exchange (the father had a nice place at Hampstead), he, Julius, was credited, like Offenbach, with having the Evil Eye. Dupplin met him at some Bohemian gathering, and walking home together Julius told Duppy he was so unhappy he intended to commit suicide that night. Good-natured Duppy told him not to make a fool of himself, but to go over to Paris and wait for him there, at the same time giving him some money to settle some old outstanding accounts in the French capital. In due course Duppy arrived and found Julius, but

the bills had not been paid! But Duppy liked the man (as one is apt to like a man whose life one has saved) and forgave him and helped him in every way (they used to write and publish silly songs, Dupplin composing the music and Julius the words) and eventually married him to a very charming and rich young widow with only one son, a Mrs. Younghusband. I do not think the marriage was a happy one.

Old Lady Ely used to say that Lord Fife (Macduff's father) was one of the few men who could with impunity quiz, as it were, the Queen—to use a vulgarism, get the best of her. On one occasion, at dinner at Windsor, when old Fife was mopping up his soup with much noise, he suddenly paused, looked up and said in his very broad Scotch: "Yer Majesty will be pleased to hear that I've given up brandy and sodas!" "I'm glad to hear it, Lord Fife," said the Queen. "I'm sure you'll be the better for it." "Thank you, Ma'am, I think I shall; and besides I find Scotch whisky and Seltzer an excellent substitute!"

Speaking of Lord Farquhar—the whilom *fidus Achates* of the late Duke of Fife, in their salad days—he married the widow of Sir Edward Scott, brother of that poor weak-minded, silly Sir Claude Scott, who, when a mere boy at a crammers for the Army, married the crammer's daughter, Selina, who afterwards distinguished herself in many ways—among others by getting Lord Russell to marry her daughter. Claude and Selina were not happy together, and eventually Claude eloped with

Lady Albert Clinton—aunt of "Mr. Lincoln," otherwise the present Duke of Newcastle who is married to a daughter of the late genial Major Candy—"Sugar-Candy." Lady Albert (daughter of a banker in Winchester) had married a Captain Stotherd, who was drowned at sea during their honeymoon trip to India, and the young widow, on her return to London, instead of returning to her parents in Hampshire, set up an establishment of her own in London—much as did poor May Sheriffe, who married Charles Hawtrey, and who eventually jumped out of the window at the Alexandra Hotel at Hyde Park Corner and broke her neck. After a few months of London life, the young widow, Mrs. Stotherd, married Albert Clinton, and some years later she eloped with Claude Scott. How long her experience of Scott life might have lasted one cannot tell, for poor, foolish Sir Claude very soon drank himself to death. He was a great friend of another *declassé* Englishman of title at that time relegated to the French capital —the late Lord Anglesey but two—at that time Lord Henry Paget. This man—who had been sent to Paris and kept there in consequence of a very painful family scandal that had its sequel at Folkestone—was hardly a favourable specimen of our aristocracy. He first of all married a woman he picked up on the streets in Litchfield; and, when divorced from her, married an Australian lady, Miss Boyd, a sister of the popular Captain Boyd, late of the Second Life Guards; and then, when

that lady died in Boulogne, he married the widowed daughter-in-law of the then Lord Kimberley, an American—*née* Miss Minnie King, who still, I think lives at Versailles. By his second wife, Miss Boyd, he had a son: that poor demented Marquis, poor little Uxbridge, who in Paris, long before his father had any hope of succeeding to the Marquisate, had been left to servants for his training, and who even as a baby three years old would lisp out filthy and blasphemous words both in French and English, much to the amusement of his father! Of course, Henry Paget went nowhere in Paris; was quite unknown at the Embassy; and in fact, was absolutely *mis à l'indeæ,* so far as decent society was concerned, and lived a retired life on a small allowance. I was introduced to him quite by accident at the Café de la Paix, by an American; and as he lived not far from me—he in the Rue Billault and I in the Champs Elysées—we used sometimes to meet in our early morning walks; but I never saw much of him and never liked him. It came therefore as a surprise to me when the American gentleman who had brought us together (it was General Van Alen, who afterwards was washed overboard from the *Scotia* on his way to New York—father of Jim Van Alen, who had, for a long time, a fine place near Kettering)—it came, as I say, as a surprise to me when I was told Henry Paget said he would sooner ask and take my advice than that of any person he had ever met! Lucky for the present Marquis that his uncle had such a good opinion

of me as we shall see. As time went on, Lord Henry, to his own and everyone's surprise, became heir to the title, and then, of course, his family began to take notice of him. One day, very much to my surprise, his Italian valet Luigi brought me a letter from his master begging me to come to his rooms in the Rue Billault. Not knowing what was up, I went and found him in a great state of excitement. He had just got a letter from his brother, Lord Alexander, saying that he wanted to marry a daughter of Lord Combermere, but did not think he should be justified in doing so, in fact, could not possibly do so, unless he, Lord Henry, as presumably next Marquis, signed certain deeds and papers. Lord Henry was very angry and fully decided to refuse point blank to do anything in any way to help. "I'm d——d if I do!" he exclaimed. "I'll see them all to Hades first. They've ignored me and treated me like a dog all these years, and now at last when they see I'm likely to get the title they begin asking favours and licking my boots!" For a long time he remained as obstinate as a pig, but at length my eloquence and his high opinion of my common sense prevailed, and he promised he would do as I urged him and meet all Lord Alexander's requirements cordially and without delay. I did not leave him, in fact, till he had promised me to write at once, and to leave for England in a few days. He kept his promise: Lord Alexander was thus enabled to marry Miss Stapleton-Cotton and the result is the present peer.

A few years before the war, I dropped one night into Covent Garden to hear Caruso in the Ballo—which he sang vilely, for he treated London audiences with the most insolent contempt. Looking up at a stage box, I saw the handsome young Marquis looking radiantly happy with his bride by his side—one of the clever daughters of the Duchess of Rutland, and hosts of people coming in to congratulate the recently wedded pair; and it amused me to think how little he could imagine that he owed his very existence—bride and title and all—to a person whom he had probably never seen, and who happened just then to be looking at him through opera glasses.

I have spoken of old General Van Alen. He was kind enough to invite me to dinner once at the Hotel Bristol to meet ex-President General U. S. (Ulysses was his name, but his countrymen called him "Unconditional Surrender") Grant—a very uninteresting individual—and took into dinner a very charming young lady from Boston, U.S.A., with whom I "put my foot in it" in a way quite worthy of my noble friend Lord Hartington. "General Van Alen tells me you were at school at ——?" she said. "Yes," I replied, "so I was. Why?" "Did you know a boy named —— there?" "Oh, yes, very well indeed. He was in my house, indeed he was my fag!" "What kind of a boy was he?" "Oh, a most horrible little cad," I replied, "the biggest cad in the whole school I should think—a shocking liar, dirty as a pig, a sneak,

a coward, in fact, an absolute little beast. But why do you ask?" "Oh, nothing." Then I suddenly saw my host making faces at me; and the grim hero of Vicksburg trying to unlock his set jaws into a smile! The young lady was engaged to be married to the boy of whom I had just been giving such an unfavourable—but true—account! She married him after all, and I hope she told him (as she probably did) of my appreciation of his character.

The boy was a relation of Sir William Gordon-Cumming, who many years later was the central figure in the Tranby Croft scandal. The cool insolence of Sir William was always very amusing. Here are two instances of it. Mr. William Gillett —still spared to us by a benevolent Providence and still to be found at the Bachelors—had but recently arrived from Banbury to conquer London Society —and Charley Buller having eloped with that very charming lady Mrs. Kingscote—*née* Louisa Ridley, a ward of the Prince of Wales—and married her at Cherbourg, had come back with his bride to London, and gave what I may call, *un diner d'essai—pour ainsi dire, tater le terrain.* Mr. Gillett was invited, and Gordon-Cumming and many others. After dinner when the ladies had gone, Gillett moved to Sir William and said, "I've so long wanted to make your acquaintance, Sir William, and am much obliged to Captain Buller for bringing us together." Gordon-Cumming glared at him but said nothing. "But," continued Gillett, in a playful tone, "I've a little bone to pick with you all the same!" "Bone!

What! How?" growled the baronet. "Yes, just a little chicken bone. You call me Gillett—now I'm no relation of the pen man. The "g" in my name is soft as in gentleman!" Then Sir William smiled. "Oh, indeed," he said. "I thought it was hard as in—beggar!"

Then again on another occasion I happened to be with that very harmless physician, but specialist in toadyism, Oscar Clayton, whose adoration of titles from King to Knight was famous, when Sir William came in very hot and very cross. He was in the Scots Guards and had been on duty all day at the Palace. "Damned if I don't chuck it!" he exclaimed, "hanging about there all day like an errand boy!" Here Sir Oscar broke in—"Been at the Palace, have you? Did you see my brougham at the door?" "No," said Cumming. "Why? Were any of the servants ill?"

CHAPTER XII

Walter Harbord. Ieratchewski. Saffery. Cusenier. Steuart Muirhead. The Late Lord Tweedmouth. Scotland Yard outwitted.

SIR WILLIAM GORDON-CUMMING married one of the very charming sisters, Miss Garner—the other married the Marquis de Breteuil—whose father was lost in a yacht disaster. She married him after, and in spite of, the Tranby Croft scandal; interested parties assuring her that it was but a passing cloud that would soon blow over. But in this—at the last moment, and in the worst crisis of his life meeting with love, tenderness, and fortune from a lady—Sir William resembled Walter Harbord. This person, brother of Lord Suffield, was, as I have already stated, at one time top favourite in the book made at Pratt's of those likely to wed Minnie Stevens. When younger, he might have been—and I believe was—good looking and attractive; but when I knew him, only during about five years preceding his marriage, he was, I always thought, anything but an Adonis, and his teeth were very bad. At the darkest moment of Harbord's life, a great light sprang up. Lady Eleanor Eaton, daughter of the Duke of Grafton, was seated by the bedside of her dying husband when the dread-

ful news reached her of the unhappy position of the only man she had ever loved. When she thought of him desolate and with no friend in the world, she hesitated not a moment, but forthwith left her husband and fled to her lover. When Eaton got to know of this, he sent at once for his lawyer to alter his will—for as she had always been a devoted wife he had left everything to her. But the solicitor came too late and Eaton dying before he could change his will, Lady Eleanor inherited his great fortune. So here again, as in the case of Gordon-Cumming, at the last and darkest moment, came love and, what Harbord had all his life lacked, plenty of money! I am very sorry to state that the marriage was not a happy one. I knew Walter Harbord only slightly, although I was constantly being brought in direct touch with him during the early 'seventies; but from what I saw of him, I confess I am astonished at the devotion of poor Lady Eleanor.

Ieratchewski (commonly called "Sherry and Whisky") was a mystery. Nobody ever knew whence he came or what was his real rank in life. He would talk vaguely of his family, and every now and then disappear, and when he came back, would explain that he had been home; but where and what that home was no one ever knew. But he was very evidently of gentle birth, good looking, very amiable and charming, well dressed, and amusing—so what more do you want? He had been an *habitué* of Nice and Monte Carlo—a very well-

known figure on the Riviera for many seasons before the Prince of Wales made his acquaintance, brought him to London, and introduced him to society here. Everyone liked him at first; and there were even rumours at one time that a certain duke and duchess would not be averse from receiving "Sherry and Whisky" as a son-in-law. Then by degrees rumours got about; people began to ask, not where the man came from or what he was, but how he got his money. Then people who had lost to him at cards began to linger over signing big cheques. A very clever detective—a most gentlemanly and distinguished looking man, Astruc by name—was brought from Vienna. All this was done without the knowledge of the Prince of Wales, who, as a matter of fact, never forgave the concocters of the plot. Then after a few weeks the crash came. One morning the late Lord Hastings—a weak, invertebrate peer—called on Ieratchewski; gave him proofs that he could be convicted of cheating and gave him forty-eight hours in which to take his name off his clubs, pay his farewell visits, and be off; no exposure or scandal (for the Prince of Wales's sake) if "Sherry and Whisky" did as he was told. The mystery man —I have a seal now that he gave me, a death's head —consented; went to a few parties that night, was gayer than ever; and then returned to his rooms in Ryder Street and took prussic acid. The Prince of Wales was in Paris at the time, but just on the point of returning. He was, in fact, at the Gare du Nord when Arthur Somerset got the dispatch

containing the news of the suicide. The Prince felt it tremendously; cancelled his departure; went back to the Bristol; went to bed; and was not seen by anybody till the next day. When I saw him the following morning just before mid-day—he was going out to Mme. de Sagan's to breakfast—he looked very ill, and told me he had been kept awake by a bad headache. George Chetwynd got hold of Astruc; and all papers and proofs incriminating Ieratchewski and his friends were destroyed—the letter that was supposed to be kept back and which was afterwards tried to be used by a certain peeress as an instrument for blackmail, being, on examination, proved to be a forgery and given up to Sir Ernest Cassel with humble apologies and a promise never to be so naughty again.

As I say, it was always more or less a mystery how Ieratchewski got his money. One of the many groundless yarns circulated at one time was that he was privately associated with Saffery, the well-known bookmaker in Paris, the very prince of good fellows, straight as a die, and generous to a fault. Saffery's story is rather an odd one. He began as a young clerk behind the counter in a Scottish draper's shop in the Faubourg St. Honoré, near the Rue du Cirque, and not far from the house of Baron Edmond de Rothschild—the name of the shop was "Aux Montagnes d'Ecosse." Tired of smirking to customers, he made up his mind to risk all on one throw of the dice as it were: if he won—all right; if not—a plunge in the Seine. He scraped together

—God only knows how—one thousand pounds (in those days twenty-five thousand francs), and put it all on Montargis to win, in the Cambridgeshire at 30 to 1. My trainer was with him in Jack Coney's Bar in the Rue Scribe when a dispatch was handed to him. "God, I'm ruined!" cried Saffery and fainted. The fool who sent the wire had written "So and so," the favourite, "did not win. Montargis did." Poor Saffery in his excitement had read no further than the first words, and thinking that that was the name of the winner collapsed. But here comes the funny and characteristic part of it. When restored to consciousness and told the good news of the event that transformed him from a penniless draper's assistant into a comparatively rich man, Saffery, controlling his emotion, simply smiled, said "Oh is that it? Thanks awfully!" read the wire, ordered a glass of stout, and went out quietly. He was a very highly strung and nervous man, but could control himself in the most wonderful manner, and I have often thought that this habit of, as it were, bottling up his feelings may have in some measure caused the sudden insanity that finally seized him, for he committed suicide by jumping off the top of a house in Margate. For years Saffery was the leading "bookie" not only in France but on the Continent, just as Dicky Fry was here: and no more deservedly popular man ever lived. He had no children himself, but he had educated and brought up at his expense natural children connected with him. I do not care to be

too precise, but these illegitimate children were not his own, and they were only " natural " because the mother could not get rid of a criminal husband and marry the father of her little ones. But Saffery came to the rescue and adopted the lot. The sums in the way of his business, paid in to him and paid out by him were enormous—for rich men *plunged* in those days, and £5,000 or even £10,000 on a horse was an everyday occurrence—and, of course, it was the excitement incident to such a life that undermined his brain and shattered his nerves.

Speaking of Saffery reminds me of a curious episode. A young German friend of mine was a member of the Prussian Jockey Club of which that most delightful man (imagine a Prussian being delightful! but he was), Count André, was President or Vice-President. My friend lost a biggish sum to Saffery and couldn't for the moment pay. He was by marriage a distant cousin of mine, so, as he did not know Paris well, he came to me in great distress. I could easily have got Saffery to wait, but the young Count wouldn't listen to that: lack of prompt and punctual payment would endanger his reputation at home. What was to be done? I knew Anderson, the English money lender in the Rue Royale, would not do so big a loan. It was useless wiring to Sam Lewis, for he hated Prussians. Füchs, the almighty Füchs, who would advance you two or three million francs at a moment's notice, had just left Paris for his home in Vienna, but was going to break his journey at different places, so

was useless. What was to be done? I took the boy to Lucein, proprietor of the Café Americain, who would always plank down a few thousands when needed, but he was already full up. He offered £1,500, but that was no good. Just as we were leaving in despair—it was nearly midnight—Lucien suddenly exclaimed, "Ah, I've got it!" Then to me, "Do you know Cusenier?" "No," I said. "Do you mean the cheap Curaçao man?" "Yes," replied Lucein. "He'll do it; he'll do anything for me. Wait and I'll give you a letter to him—take it at once." "But" I said, "look at the hour. The wretched man will be in bed." "Never mind," said Lucien. "Take my advice and go there to him with the Count at once." So he gave us the letter and we jumped into a *sapin* and off we went. Cusenier lived in his Distillery in the Boulevard Filles du Calvaire—the ends of the earth—and was, as I had expected, in bed and asleep when we rang at the outer gate. But he jumped up when he read Lucien's letter; did not even put on slippers or dressing-gown—I do not think he had any—but came out in a very short nightgown that did not come to his knees; his hairy, dirty, peasant legs knotted with muscles like the legs of an athlete. He did the trick at once, and then lit up his picture gallery to show us his treasures. He had been one of the earliest and most generous patrons of Courbet and Manet, and that (to me) horrible school; and was the owner of some of the finest masterpieces of those artists. He wanted to treat us to some

of his liqueurs, but as our friends in Whitechapel say, "We wasn't 'avin' none," and took our departure. It was really a curious adventure, and I shall never forget the sight of this big, burly, dirty, half-naked, elderly peasant writing out a big cheque and giving it to a slight, fair-haired lad of about twenty-two in evening dress; and then lighting two big candles and leading us through his spacious picture gallery, holding up the lights every now and then and turning to us—"Voilà un chef d'œuvre par exemple! Est-ce assez beau, hein?" Young Count P. sent him back his money with a handsome present on top, in less than a month, though the bill was given for three.

Before leaving the wicked world of gamblers, I must note down the following curious incident, and before narrating it I must in all truth and honesty confess there was in those days much gambling, and that high play was the fashion. That popular regiment the Blues was at one time specially noted for this particular form of pastime. Owen Williams, and the ever-to-be-regretted Oliver Montagu (brother of Lord Sandwich, whose sanguinary nasal flow caused so much perturbation in New York at the ball) modified matters for the better, but in the days of Duncan Baillie gambling was the curse of the Horse Guards. Not only was Duncan Baillie himself a great gambler (and what subaltern dared to refuse the honour of losing large sums to his Colonel?), but there was an officer in his regiment who, to speak frankly, was little else than a pro-

fessional blackleg — Steuart Muirhead — Dick Steuart, as he was familiarly called. This fine, big, swarthy dandy came from Calcutta, where his father was a carriage maker; and he was no more a Scot than the Pope is a Wesleyan. He came to London to seek his fortune, was taken up by a man-devouring peeress and married an heiress, Miss Muirhead, whose name he tacked on to his own and whom he treated so badly that she died of a broken heart (on the very night of her death he went to the Caledonian Ball!). I knew him from the beginning of his career till towards the end (he died in Paris in obscurity, but I had lost sight of him for some time before that) and I must confess he certainly had a glamour, a curious fascination quite his own—something almost Oriental. He casually remarked once to the beautiful Duchess (Constance) of Westminster, "Let me waltz with a girl twice and she's mine!" and quite possibly this vile boast was true, for there was something distinctly magnetic about the man and he was very splendid in Scottish garb—wearing the Stuart tartan to which he had no more right than Georges Carpentier has to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The Prince of Wales was very kind to him; and Dick Steuart on more than one occasion took very base advantage of his kindness, but then no semblance even of sense of honour ever troubled Dick. Yet like all such men, he went too far; and at last, in concert with the uncle of a certain duke, he got into terrible trouble about some letters connected

with Lady Hastings—Florence Paget, the "pocket Venus," wife of the plunging Marquis, who afterwards married George Chetwynd—(the letters were forgeries, by the way) and was sent by special express to Coventry with no return ticket. When the tempest had subsided a little, he wrote from Paris to the Prince at Sandringham, asking him to write him some few lines in a friendly tone that he might show them as a kind of whitewash; and H.R.H., always ready to help anyone in trouble, did so. Then Dick Steuart came over to London for a few weeks. I met the old Duchess of Montrose at Sandown, and she said to me: "Have you seen Dick Steuart? He called on me the other day. He's going about London with his character in his pocket like a servant." But he still, in his autumnal days, had the old devil in him, and—at a club not far from Piccadilly—completely ruined a youth whose father had made a large fortune in trade—relieving him at the rate of £8,000 a week. That was his last great adventure in pasteboard.

But now for the curious incident to which I referred at the beginning of these remarks. Obviously the flow of rich or more or less guileless punters, likely to lose large sums of money if properly handled, could not be expected to be like the brook in Tennyson; and so the arrival of any new Crœsus junior was, naturally, not unwelcome. One day, Sir George Chetwynd met in the Birdcage at Newmarket an American. George, always a lover of adventure since the day he was asked to leave Eton

and went to Harrow, got into conversation with the man—his name was Stockwell—and before long came to the conclusion that now he had actually and at last, and positively, found what in Yankee lingo is termed "it." The man was common enough, but he was evidently rich, apparently guileless, passionately fond of a gamble; and knew no one. What a find! High influence was invoked and obtained: Stockwell was made honorary member of a select club, and was presented to the Prince of Wales, who was most kind to him. Then the fun began: afternoon and evening card parties and Stockwell losing and paying up without a murmur. What a Utopia! Then the American gentleman retired for a week—it was never clearly ascertained where he went or what he did during those mysterious seven days—and then returned; said he had just got more money from the States, and in recognition of the kind hospitality that had been extended to him gave a big dinner party, saying with a wink, "We'll have some bully big fun afterwards: a real dandy rattle!" After dinner the "dandy rattle" began; huge sums were lost and (*me miserum!*—to the surprise of all except one) Stockwell won the lot. Cheques were, of course, given and Stockwell invited to a dozen more dinner parties "*pour la revanche.*" But alas, when the cheques had been cashed, Stockwell disappeared and was seen no more; and it was afterwards discovered that he was merely a member of a well-known clique of blacklegs and cardsharpers in the States, and had been

sent over to pure, innocent London for the express purpose of relieving our lambkins of their wool! Chetwynd became for the time being the most unpopular man in society and bore the wound in his heart to his dying day.

And this reminds me of another trick successfully performed on us guileless Europeans by the artful people who have presented the world with wooden nutmegs, the Hessian fly, the Colorado beetle, and the Monroe Doctrine. It is a story but little known. The marriage which Lady (Arthur) Paget arranged between Boni de Castellane and Miss Gould was as unfortunate as that which the same lady arranged between Lord Yarmouth and Miss Thaw. The Castellanes were very unhappy together; Boni was a butterfly whose passion for sipping nectar from calyxes not legally his, and for pasteboard, dice box, and horse-flesh pastimes seemed insatiable, treated his wife—to whom, of course, he owed everything—very coldly to say the least of it; and in this was aided and abetted by Princess Radziwill. When there came the question as to what name should be given the baby, and the mother suggested that of her father, her husband brutally exclaimed, "Oh no; never! I don't want my child to be called after a thief!" "Well," said the poor Countess, "you don't mind taking the money of a thief, do you?" Things went from bad to worse, and their beautiful little pink marble palace in the Avenue du Bois became an inferno for the poor neglected wife, who was

hearing every day of her husband's extravagances (she had partly closed her generous purse, but, still, not a few bank notes slipped out) and of the attention he was paying to Mme. Henri de Rothschild and Mme. Leon de Jauze, and others. But after all, these terrible rumours, although she knew them to be true, were only rumours. How could she get proof that would enable her to free herself from this daily torture? None of Boni's friends, male or female, would betray him: they lived on him, or rather on the money his wife gave him—the money of the man he had called a thief. One night late, when Boni returned home he saw, to his surprise, the windows of the drawing-room lighted up—they were generally in darkness—and the *concierge* informed him that Mme. de Castellane was receiving an American gentleman who had just arrived in Paris. "Let me introduce you to an old friend of ours from New York, Boni," exclaimed his wife, "Mr. Herbert J. Perkins," and Boni found himself shaking hands with a handsome young fellow in evening dress who said, "Happy to make your acquaintance, Sir," in quite the best Fifth Avenue manner. He left shortly after, having accepted an invitation to come to breakfast with them on the morrow. Then Mme. de Castellane explained everything to her somewhat puzzled spouse. This young man—(one of the F.F.V's., or First Families of Virginia)—was an old friend of theirs in America, and he had just inherited a very large fortune and come over to Europe to

enjoy himself, and knew nobody and had come to her—"You know I know nobody, but you do—you know everybody, Boni. Do take him in hand and introduce him about and make him enjoy himself. As you see, he's a charming young fellow, and I'm certain you'll like him. We've known him at home since he was a child." Boni's mouth watered; if this man had plenty of money and would spend it, why, possibly, he might be useful and possibly make up in some measure for the recent relatively tight condition of the money market as regulated by his wife. So he took him in hand (which so delighted his wife that she gave her Boni a handsome present), introduced him to the Rue Royale Club, went with him to the races and borrowed money from him—money lent frankly and freely with a "Whatever and whenever you like, my dear Count" at the end of each "tap." Surely this was heaven! Boni introduced him to Mme. Leon de Jauze and to Mme. Henri de Rothschild; told him all about each of them; and then (quite privately and "*foi de gentilhomme,* don't breathe a word of it to anyone") showed Mr. Herbert J. Perkins many letters from many ladies. This went on for a month; and then one night, returning home late as usual to his ever disconsolate wife, and having made an appointment with his chum Herbert P. to meet him at the Jeu de Paume in the morning, he found a letter waiting for him. What a thunderbolt! His wife had left him for ever: Herbert P. was simply an American detective whom she had amply supplied with money; the

letters from the ladies had all been photographed: Herbert P. was, of course, ready to give all necessary evidence on oath, and she was going to sue for a divorce at once; which, of course, she did, and obtained it. Poor Boni unquestionably deserved it; had, as a Labour member would say, "bin arskin' for it," and certainly "got it" *En veux tu? En voilà!* I don't think poor Mme. de Castellane fared much better in her second marriage, for she linked herself to the young Prince de Sagan, the very unworthy son of that most delightful and popular of men, Boson, "le Prince Charming." But Anna Gould's second husband, of course, never for a moment occupied the same social position enjoyed by his father—in fact, never quite recovered from the shadow he cast on his name by being mixed up with Serge de Morny—the young Duke's younger brother, and others—in that very shady "Date Coffee" business—a Bevany, Hooleyish, Bottomleyfied sort of enterprise of forty odd years ago—no doubt the old bad blood of the Seillières showing itself again, for, of course, his "Maman," who, by the way, he hated so that he told her once he'd kill her (she told me so herself), was the famous "Jeanne" of that ilk.

When I mentioned just now, *en parenthèse,* the fact that George Chetwynd had been requested to leave Eton and so found his way to Harrow, I did not for a moment intend to cast a slur on the memory of that very charming man. Being asked to leave is by no means or in any sense a disgrace; and, indeed, if you've plenty of money, influence

and audacity, you might be hurled from the dome of St. Paul's without even bruising your collar-bone. A very striking example of this was Teddy Marjoribanks, the late Lord Tweedmouth. At Harrow, and this I know from a mutual friend, Marjoribanks nearly starved a boy to death, the smallest boy with the longest name in the School, Charley Buller used to say "Inverarity-minimus." He locked him up without food to do some Greek lines for him, and for this delinquency received the most awful punishment to which it was possible to condemn him. He got a "Monitor's whopping" —walking slowly down a line composed of eighteen strong lads all belabouring you with thick ashplants: and finally was publicly expelled! But that was not all. Teddy went to Oxford; was ringleader in the famous "Oxford vandalism" scandal of 1870—they broke into Christ Church Library and burnt and destroyed various books and papers—and not only was he the ringleader, but had the sublime cheek to declare solemnly at a meeting (before his guilt had become known, of course) that no man connected with that outrage was worthy of the name of gentleman! But Dean Liddell communicated with Scotland Yard; the matter was sifted; Teddy's complicity proved; a warrant issued for his arrest, and a detective came down very late in the afternoon to apprehend him. The man had been specially told to avoid all possible scandal and publicity, so when he found Teddy was dining with some friends at the Mitre, he decided to postpone taking his man till the dinner was over and Marjoribanks

could be spoken to alone. Now it so happened that there was a clever (although always tipsy) and very famous waiter at the Mitre named William, who had eyes and ears all over his body. William noticed the man lounging outside—a dead cat could smell a detective a mile away—spotted him at once; told Teddy; they both looked out of the window; and Teddy, seeing the waiter was right, took in the whole situation at a glance. He sent for his servant; gave him certain instructions, and then went back to his friends at table. When dinner was over they all strolled out together, some leaving, but most of them walking with Teddy down Oriel Lane to the "House," the detective following. Big Ben began to strike and Teddy in the gateway, stood on purpose, very much *en évidence* chatting with his friends and in full sight of the Scotland Yard man, till Big Ben stopped and then they all turned into college, as the gates were closed. Now nobody is allowed to go out after that; you can stay out if you are already out; but you cannot go out. The detective knew this; and thinking to avoid scandal, decided to take his man when alone, early the next morning. But when he came very early on the morrow he found his bird had flown. Teddy had ordered his servant to be with his dog-cart in Blue Boar Lane at three; let himself down from his window by his sheets, drove to Banbury, caught the express, and was in Paris that evening! Everything was hushed up and Teddy lived to be an ornament to Society, First Lord of the Admiralty and Lord Privy Seal.

CHAPTER XIII

Augustus Lumley. "Rose" or "Cabbage." Late Duke of Albany. The Von Hoffmans. The Marquis de Morès. Sam Lewis. His special way of conducting his business. Harry Milbank. Stranded at Dieppe. Marini. Leonide Leblanc. Clemenceau and Duc d'Aumale. "Il n'y a place que pour moi," and "Quid Mihi."

THE late Lord Tweedmouth's somewhat abrupt and dramatic exits from the two seats of learning that had the honour of preparing him for the battle of life, recalls to my mind the great dislike entertained for him by the Duke of Edinburgh, and which I could never understand. Of course, I never asked the Duke, and always forgot to question Teddy on the point. It is probable that Marjoribanks had been rude to the Prince; and if so, that would account for it all, for the Duke was very easily offended and had a temper easily roused, and when roused, of the temperature of Hades. Teddy was by nature (and I think sometimes on principle) very rude, and I remember when he married one of the most charming of the Churchills — a family hardly famous for its urbanity—Augustus Lumley said, "I think a box of sticking plaster, or some kind of embrocation for bruises would be the best wedding present to send them." Dear old Augustus! What a brick he was!

During the last five-and-thirty or forty years of Queen Victoria's reign, he was the supreme ruler of society, or perhaps I ought rather to say, the most powerful man for purely social purposes in Society; for, of course, "Disgustus," as Kenneth Howard, his lieutenant in command of things social, used playfully to call him—never meddled in political or really serious matters. Augustus began life in the Household Cavalry—the Blues, I think, but I did not know him then—and later, by special command of Queen Victoria ("Judy," as he used to call her, who was very fond of him), he became a member of the Household—Master of Ceremonies. He made society a business; he knew everything about everybody; who was who; all the secret and public scandals, and who was to blame, and who not in each: the names of all the girls and boys of good family who would shortly be beginning social life —arranging with parents to have the boy's name put down for such a club; and the girl to be presented by such a lady, and all the rest of it. I remember two instances of this well-known prescience and omniscience of the great Augustus. In those days it took in ordinary circumstances twelve years for a peer and fifteen for a commoner to get into the Travellers, and even then some supercilious nonentity from the Foreign Office might stroll in and blackball you; and one day finding a mere lad there—true, he was the eldest son of a rich peer—I asked him how he managed it and he said, "Oh, Augustus Lumley jawed the Governor into hav-

ing my name put down when I was cramming at Cheam for Eton." The other instance was rather funny. A man with Lord Strathnairn had called on Lord Lyons in Paris; and when they had gone, and while arranging with George Sheffield to invite them to dinner, it suddenly occurred both to the Ambassador and his *fidus Achates* that there had been some secret but very unpleasant scandal about the young man in London some time back. They neither of them could remember exactly what it was; nor were they sure that he was the man. The next morning, breakfasting at Voisin's with Sheffield (a man I dearly loved and who was very fond of me), he asked me what I knew about it. I had heard something but did not quite remember the particulars; and besides, there was the all important question whether this was the right man or not, for, of course, the fact of his having called with Lord Strathnairn did not vouch for his social purity. So I suggested I should write to Augustus and ask him. "Grand idea!" exclaimed George. "Do, and write here so that I may see just what you say." So I wrote on the restaurant paper to Lumley, told him everything and asked him to wire back his reply, as Lord Lyons wanted to know at once. Now, knowing that Lumley never liked to compromise himself I wrote, "If the chap's all right, wire 'Rose': if wrong, wire 'Cabbage.'" The next morning I got the wire and took it to the Embassy. It was composed of but one word, "Cabbage," and signed A. L. Most of his life Augustus Lumley

had little or no money; but he was never in want of it, for he had no expensive tastes; never gambled nor betted; and was being so perpetually asked out that he had only his tailor and laundry to pay; his rooms in Kinnerton Street, and later on, John Street, being very simple and cheap. He was the first man to obtain for the Rothschilds final and absolute social recognition: he induced the Princess of Wales to go to a ball at Hyde Park Corner and led the cotillion with her there. He was a well-known blessing to wall flowers; for his kind eyes would wander round a ball room, and if they lighted on some poor neglected damsel worthy of notice, he would have her out at once; and to have danced with Augustus Lumley gave her almost a halo of divinity in the eyes of the Chickos in the Household Brigade, and more often than not brought about an offer of marriage! Augustus Lumley was, as I say, ridiculously poor—about £400 a year almost all his life, but never in want and very happy. When his brother died and he got Rufford Abbey and a large fortune, he was very miserable! As a matter of fact, I really think he must almost have been poorer than in the old days, for everyone came after him borrowing and no one ever dreamed of paying him back. It was at his villa at Cannes, that the late Duke of Albany died. Lumley was ill and in England, but he had lent the villa to the Duke, of whom he was very fond. The poor young Duke really danced himself to death. Violent exercise with him sometimes superinduced hæmorrhage, and

one evening at a party given by friends of mine at the Villa della Bocca—the Von Hoffmans, German-Americans, she a sister-in-law of Sam Ward—Uncle Sam, Rosebery's friend—he danced almost all the evening. In the morning when his host, the Baron, called for him at Lumley's villa to take the Prince out for a drive in his pony cart, he found His Royal Highness was dead. The death of his youngest brother was a terrible blow to the Prince of Wales, who loved him dearly. It was on the racecourse at Aintree that His Royal Highness heard the news, and he nearly fainted. He always used to speak of him (of course, only to those with whom he was familiar) as if he were a child: "Dear little chap." The Von Hoffmans had only two children—daughters, Medora and Pauline: the eldest married the handsome Marquis de Morès, eldest son of the Duc de Vallombrosa, whom I have spoken of as being a prominent Lion, in the Lion's Den at the Opera in Paris in the Palæolithic age: and the younger, Pauline, married a German—Baron von Stumm, one of Krupp's group at Essen, I think. Morès, although a very handsome man like his father, was again like his father, a most ridiculous *poseur*. They were of no family at all; and the great pose of Morès (here very unlike his father) was a deep-rooted hatred of England, to which sentiment he was always giving very loud and dramatic utterance, *urbi et orbi*. Of course, no one in this country cared a tinker's expletive whether he loathed or adored us, but when I found out the real

reason of all his impertinence, and told the Prince of Wales, he was greatly amused. It was purely and simply because Sam Lewis refused to lend him a shilling—just as he refused to lend Milan of Serbia, introduced by George Chetwynd—"No, my dear Chetwynd," he explained, "none of your d——d foreigners for me: kings or cooks. It's quite as much as I can do to look after English gentlemen, and I'm hanged if I don't find that too much for me sometimes!" Morès was killed by some Arabs and for a long time his murderers could not be found. But his widow, implacable as Fate, tracked them down, step by step, and succeeded at last, many long years after the crime had been committed, in bringing the murderers of her husband to the gallows. But happening on useful and amusing little Sam, I must say a few words about him.

Sam Lewis began by hawking cheap artificial jewellery. He carried his wares on a tray hung by a strap round his neck and his chief customers were private soldiers. Thus armed he appeared one morning at The Curragh; most of the men were out with the Colonel, Lord Cardigan; but they soon came back; and the hero of Balaklava, very hot and very bad tempered, threw himself from his horse and striding to some stone steps, sat down with a frown on his face like a thundercloud. Up crept the young Jew and humbly began, "I beg your pardon, my lord"—but he was interrupted by a broadside of heavy-loaded expletives that would have blown all the Balaklava guns to blazes. Sam

waited; even then he knew the value of time; then when there came a pause for breath, he began again. "I beg, I really humbly beg your lordship's pardon, but"—Here again a tornado of awful words. Then more lack of breath; then another word from Sam, then more oaths. At last the noble lord had to stop; his lips were on fire from the language they'd been expressing, and he rose to get a water jacket of brandy and soda. Then Sam had him, and fired home at once, "I beg pardon, my lord, but all I wanted to say was that it's madness to sit down on those cold stones when you're so hot and perspiring. It's enough to kill any man!" "Good God!" exclaimed his lordship. "You're right! Who the h—— are you? What a damned sensible little chap you are!" In such fashion did Sam make his first friend. Cardigan helped him; and by degrees he climbed into the saddle, and so successfully did he ride that at his death he left over two millions sterling, a life interest in most of it to his fat, handsome wife, who afterwards married an officer in the Scots Guards; a handsome legacy to "Hope Temple," and, among many other charitable bequests, £10,000 a year to some London hospital. There were plenty of money-lenders with far more money to lend, in the days when Sam started, than he had; but he made money much faster than they did and much more of it, because he was endowed with common sense and could read character. He would—I speak, of course, figuratively—refuse to lend say, to a duke merely because he was a duke—or give him but

little—if he saw the man in his heart was a thief (most members of his trade would lend to a duke *quâ* duke): but he would readily pour out money to a mere commoner in whom there was no guile, in whom he could read honesty plainly written; give him at once far more than the man asked for—force it on him—and bleed him and bleed him and bleed him, till he saw signs of honesty slipping out with the blood, and then cauterize at once—very distinctly cauterize. Men would come to him with, say, £20,000 a year; and leave him with nothing, literally nothing, but a cab fare! I know one man who, when he first went to Cork Street, had £80,000 a year, and when he left Cork Street—at least he did not leave Cork Street, Cork Street left him—his income had dwindled to £1,000 a year, and he only had that because it could not be alienated from him, or touched in any way. But though, of course, Sam robbed you, he did it so nicely, in such a jolly way, that the dangling corpse would in many cases shake off the white cap and look up to the hangman and cough out huskily, "Thanks awfully, old chap! You're a brick!" I met once in the Burlington Arcade a man who had been reduced from considerable wealth to absolute penury by artful Sammy's "jolly" ways; and speaking of him to me, his victim called him a thorough brick! The thing was so absolutely comic and ridiculous that I could not help dropping in and telling Sam: I knew he was always glad to have a laugh and chat with me, and I wanted one of his big cigars. When I told Sam

what the man had said he laughed and nodded, "Oh, yes—I know he likes me and I like him, too. I've just given him a tenner because he said he was broke!" Marvellous! A tenner, and heartfelt thanks and sincere gratitude in exchange for well over a hundred thousand pounds in hard cash! Only Sam could do it.

And another great and rare gift possessed by Sam Lewis, was his unerring judgment, a gift that had much to do with his rapid acquisition of wealth. He knew just when to stop; some men, as I say, he would bleed to death; others whose true regard—not the post-mortem kind of affection of which I have just been speaking—he thought of more value to him than their shekels, he would just relieve of a pint or so and then—no more—"Tout est fini, mon gendre!" He began by lending me money when I was only 17. It was not illegal to lend to minors then, and Sam made most of his money out of minors, when it was legal and when it became illegal too, for Sam did not mind; he could size up his "infant," and he knew that a sense of honour often has a higher claim than a mere statute. I came for one thousand (I was a novice) and he sent me away with three. I always paid him on the nail and went on borrowing from him and always paying on the nail. I was, therefore, I thought, always sure of help from him when in need:—when, for example, a horse I had fancied fought shy of the winning post, or any sudden reproach from Balaam's ass like that. I was therefore as surprised and disappointed as

Cardinal Wolsey who counted on his greatness ripening, when one day Sam said, "No." "But," I pleaded, "you've been lending to me for years. I've never kept you waiting a day!" "Quite right," he said. "You're a model—fit for a glass case. But I won't lend you another bob, because, although you're better off now than you were when first I knew you, there must be an end to all things, and I'd sooner keep your friendship than have any more of your money. So not a cent more from me, my dear boy. But you can go to——: he'll lend you what you want. Tell him to ring me up and ask me what I think of you."

A name Sam was very fond of seeing on a bill was that of that brick of bricks, Harry Vane Milbank: "I can do with as much of that paper as you care to bring me," said Sam. Of course, if Harry Milbank had not made a *mésalliance,* he would have inherited Raby and pots of money ("It's a pity at Raby, there isn't a baby," wrote "cheeky" Villiers); but as it was, an arrangement was come to with Lord Rosebery's step-father, the late and last Duke of Cleveland, and Sir Frederick Milbank —the second best shot in Great Britain in those days—and his son Harry; a cheque for an enormous sum was given, and my friend Harry dropped out; but not penniless—far from it. He married a woman called Baby Douglas, and came to live in Paris, where in his beautiful house in the Avenue Montaigne (nearly opposite the silly Pompeian Palace built by "Plon Plon") he set about

making a collection of rare and valuable boxes of all kinds—snuff boxes, powder boxes, bonbonières, etc.—the collection was estimated to be worth over £40,000 (a million francs). His wife was a common woman (she died only the other day in St. John's Wood), but everyone, from the Prince of Wales down, knew and loved Harry. By the way, when a mere lad in the Blues he nearly married the famous Mabel Gray (her real name was Annie King, and she came originally from Jay's mourning shop), and his father and the Duke of Cleveland were only just in time to stop it.

Well, knowing Sam's liking for Harry Milbank's paper, whenever I wanted money I asked Harry for a bill; he never refused it; I sent it on to Cork Street or to Grosvenor Square, and got the cash by return—often by wire from Sam's bank to mine. I was always punctual in my payments and this went on for years; but once it landed me in a hole. I had got a bill from Harry, and instead of sending it over by post as usual, I, like a fool, entrusted it to my trainer who was going to London —and I myself went to Dieppe, to the races. Knowing this money was coming from Sam, I plunged and lost, and went on losing. No trainer and no money! I wired to Sam, and he replied: "Gave ——— the money a week ago!" What the devil had become of the man? I knew, of course, he would not rob me; but where was he? Where I was, was very evident—in the cart! I could not even pay my hotel bill (not a small one), and what

made matters worse was that I and a lot more had been invited by the Grand Duke of Baden to come and be his guests at his Jubilee. All the others had gone on. I, like an ass, had gone to Dieppe, intending to follow with Sam's money, and here I was stranded—and Duppy and Alec Baltazzi and Marcus Beresford writing from Baden, "What's the matter? When are you coming?" Giving up my trainer at last as a bad egg, I accepted a loan of the money I needed—(I blush to say)—from a lady of questionable repute—the fair and aristocratic-looking Marini, the *chère amie* of Duleep Singh and originally a chambermaid at an hotel in Knightsbridge. The Prince was so much in love with her that she had to send a wire twice a day to Elvedon to tell him how she was getting on! So having paid my hotel bill I went on to Baden where, of course, I was at once all right. Not a word all this time from my trainer, whose address in England I did not know. After the Jubilee festivities, when I returned to Paris, I found a letter from my man waiting for me, dated only a few days before, asking me when I wanted him to bring the money! He explained that he thought I had gone to Baden with the others, and judged it best to wait till I got back. I sent Marini a handsome present (of course I had returned her the money she lent me the moment I reached Baden) and so that was the happy ending of a very unpleasant episode. As I have said, Harry Milbank shed out notes to me whenever I asked him, and I am glad to remember

that I met every one of them punctually, and out of those very many thousands did not owe him a shilling at the time of his most tragic death—he killed two brothers in two successive duels, and was so wounded by the third that he went to Davos Platz to die.

I have said Harry Milbank's father (Sir Frederick) was in those days the second best shot in England. Lord Walsingham was the first; Lord de Grey the third, the late and last Lord Ripon, and Duleep Singh the fourth. Duleep Singh used, at Elvedon (now the property of Lord Iveagh) to shoot sitting down on a matting and whirling round as if on a pivot. He was not a bad chap, and in every way superior to his eldest son Victor (I do not know Edward), who was by no means a pleasing youth, and who certainly had not a good influence on Lord Carnarvon, who died only the other day. When first I knew Lord Porchester as he was then, he was a fine handsome youth, but Victor Duleep Singh led him into wild ways. The Koh-i-noor rightly belonged to Duleep Singh—it had been taken when he was a child from his father's palace at Lahore—and he once laughingly spoke to me of Queen Victoria as "Mrs. Fagin," for, he said, "she's really a receiver of stolen property, knowing it to be stolen, and has no more right to that diamond than I have to Windsor Castle!" When I told him how Marini had helped me out of my scrape at the Dieppe Hotel, he was greatly amused. Marini (no doubt originally "Maharanee") was,

as I said, originally a chambermaid at a Knightsbridge Hotel, but in appearance she looked like the typical "Clara Vere de Vere"—the patrician English girl, the descendant of countless Earls. But when she spoke the charm vanished: her manners were admirable, but her voice had the unmistakable Whitechapel accent, and her pronunciation and the expressions she used were, to say the least, abnormal. She and I often breakfasted together, and one day the old Duchesse de FitzJames happened to look into the coffee-room and saw us and asked me afterwards who was that beautiful and aristocratic looking young lady with whom I was breakfasting; and I replied mysteriously just to *intriguer* the old lady: "Oh, *c'est une très grande dame Anglaise!*" But the wicked old Duchess knew better and was not to be deceived. Although she had only glanced into the coffee-room for a second, nothing on that table had escaped her; and she looked at me and smiled, and said: "Oh, indeed! Since when have *très grandes* English ladies been in the habit of drinking brandy and soda at breakfast?"

Speaking of Duleep Singh makes me think of that very extraordinary woman Leonide Leblanc, for I introduced him to her, and on his rare visits to Paris he rarely failed to call on her in her beautiful little house in the Rue de Prony. Leonide was a modern Ninon de l'Enclos; witty, very *intriguante,* very ambitious, very good natured, and very amusing and *bonne fille.* She was not beautiful,

indeed hardly pretty, but she had a clever and pleasing face. Like the famous Ninon to whom I have compared her, she brought *la galanterie* up to the level of a fine art, and her admirers came from all sorts and conditions of men. For many a month she had Georges Clemenceau (how he will smile if he reads these lines and remembers the old days!) and the Duc d'Aumale at her feet at the same time. They each one knew of the other and they were not jealous—on the contrary, rather amused. One day the Prince would ask her laughingly, "Well, and what has your *communard sans culottes* friend got to say for himself?" And perhaps the day after Clemenceau would inquire with his cynical smile, "Has your wicked old *Altesse Royale* been abusing me lately?" She had good taste in artistic bibelots and her house in the Rue de Prony was full of really valuable furniture and works of art—many of them given to her by the Grand Seigneur of Chantilly. I had a very curious seal that had been given me by the late Lord St. Germans but two ("Rufus," the red-headed one, who was made a peer in his own right as Lord Eliot by Gladstone) and I gave it to Leonide. It represented Cupid standing in a heart and looking over the top; and the *devise* was, "Il n'y a place que pour moi." "Now," I said as I gave it to Leonide, "this is for you to use when you're writing to an *amant de cœur!* And this," and I produced a pencil sketch made for me on purpose the day before by Gustave Jacquet, representing Cupid standing with arms extended

looking up, and under which I had written ("Quid Mihi"), "is for you to use when you're writing to an *amant de poche*—some dear old Jew banker who's only got strength enough left to write cheques. See the device, 'What have you got for me?'" Leonide was delighted, and the "Quid Mihi" motto and Cupid were on all her paper for a long time after.

CHAPTER XIV

Duke of Edinburgh. Carolus Duran. The Barons and Amos v. 22. The Duke and money. The Duke and Lord Campbell. The Duchess of Edinburgh. Her dislikes. Her marvellous memory. Mr. Everett. "Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green." Extraordinary curiosity and memory of King Edward. "Hippy" Damer. Dean Stanley. Edward I and *fromage de Brie*.

I HAVE incidentally once or twice mentioned the Duke of Edinburgh. I had the privilege of knowing him fairly well, and have often thought that in some respects he was one of the most interesting men I ever came across, considering not only the position he held but the character of the man himself. He was certainly no ordinary man: and, if it had fallen to his lot to become King of England, he would very assuredly and distinctly have "made things hum." In the first place he had (I am speaking now of the time before he went to Germany) quite remarkably handsome features, although his figure was not very graceful and was rather too short. But his head and face were, I think, a study. I brought him to the studio of Carolus Duran one morning to see that great artist's picture of his sister-in-law, Sophie Croizette, and Duran gave us a breakfast afterwards at Foyod's. The Duke never refused a meal, and I think he

would have lunched and dined with a ragpicker—nay, I am sure he would if he could have had beefsteak and onions! I saw the impression that the Duke's handsome and intelligent face made on the great Carolus, and so was not surprised, on meeting him a few days later, when he told me he had been on the point of asking the Prince to let him paint his portrait and make him a present of it, but did not like to do so. I laughed very much at the idea of the Duke's refusing anything he could get for nothing; and told Duran it was a pity he had let his timidity overcome him. Unfortunately the Duke was no longer in Paris, or I would have settled the matter at once to the satisfaction of both parties concerned. When next I saw the Duke it was in England and many months later, and I forgot to tell him what Duran had said. A portrait of Queen Victoria's handsome second son, painted by this great French painter, would have been a valuable addition to the collection of family portraits at Windsor.

The Duke was inordinately fond of money. He spent it freely enough, for the rumour that he was a miser is utterly false; but he dearly loved it; and above all dearly loved getting it for nothing. If he could not get the actual cash for nothing, he would content himself with enjoying the things that the cash of others obtained. One trick of his made him at one time very unpopular in London; he made it a habit to find out, say at White's or at the Marlborough, who happened to be giving a particularly

good dinner, and to calmly invite himself to it. "Dick, I hear you've got a damned good dinner on to-night; I think I'll join you." "Oh, do, Sir; I shall be only too delighted." He had a very strong will of his own, was not pliant and amenable to reason like his elder brother, and when he got an idea into his head no dynamite in the way of argument or proofs to the contrary would blow it out of his comely cranium. This strange (German?) obstinacy, however, was not by any means apparent at first—on the contrary, he always listened courteously, and seemed to acquiesce. Dean Swift says: "If you want to gain the reputation of a sensible man you should be of the opinion of the person with whom, for the time being, you are conversing." It is very likely the Duke of Edinburgh had read this obvious truism (he knew not a little about literature) and bore it in mind, for it was rather comic the way he would agree with everyone; and then when the man with the argument had departed almost invariably exclaim: "What utter rubbish that chap has been talking! Did you ever hear such rot in your life?" And sometimes, indeed, he would not wait till the man had gone, but would, after having listened to him, say, for ten minutes, and agreeing to all he was saying, suddenly break out with, "Damned rubbish, my dear——; utter rot!"

I remember one particularly funny instance of this sudden *volte-face*. One morning when I went to see His Royal Highness at the Bristol, I found a fat German-American Jew with him: a Jew born

in Germany who had made millions in America, and who was at that time trying to float a scheme in connection with lighthouses on the Bosphorus, and flattered himself he could get the support of the Duke. This very stout "Baron"—they're all Barons—had two other fat Barons, men of minor importance, with him, and everything seemed to be going on splendidly when I came in—the Duke evidently had been saying "Yes" to everything; and the atmosphere of the little low-ceilinged entresol positively palpitated with, "I'm sure you'll agree, Sir." "Rather! No doubt about it." "Your Royal Highness can see that at a glance, of course." "Certainly, of course I do!" When I was announced, the three financial magnates rose to depart. But at the last moment the chief of them asked in an obsequious tone if by any chance they could hope that during his stay in Paris His Royal Highness would honour them with his company at dinner—any night His Royal Highness might choose. "Thank you very much," said the Prince, "I'll come with great pleasure; but I can't say what night. I've got such a lot of engagements. But I'll let you know to-morrow." The men bowed themselves out, their natural adiposity being added to by at least two inches through the delightful certainty in their minds that they had "bagged" the Queen of England's second son. But no sooner had the door closed behind them than he began: "Those three b—— fat, swollen porpoises"—his language was always picturesque and vehement,

doubtless the proper tongue for a Royal Tar—"are the three biggest asses I've ever met! Imagine them thinking I'm going to help them to light up the Bosphorus when they've only got a contract signed by the Sultan and the Grand Vizier! Why, every baby knows their signatures aren't worth a damn! They sign and repudiate fifty times a day. The only signature worth having is that of the Chief Eunuch—the Khislar-Aghassi: once you've got that it's all right, you're safe, you can go ahead! But the damned old Sultan's and b——old Grand Vizier's signatures are not worth the ink they sign with. These asses will get in this money; the Head Eunuch will refuse to sign; the Sultan and the other chap will apologize, repudiate and back out; and the damned Bosphorus will be lighted with the money obtained by these fat asses all right enough, but it will be engineered secretly by a nominee of the Chief Eunuch; and those fat fools won't be in it!" I cared nothing about the Bosphorus, or the Chief Eunuch (although, of course, I knew the Duke was absolutely correct, and the one and only signature to a contract with the Turkish Government that you need to be safe is that of the Khislar-Aghassi—others are valueless), and so ere long the Duke and I had drifted to other topics; and after a chat I reminded him that he was due at the Embassy for lunch that morning, and he prepared to go out. "Just a moment," he said suddenly, and went back into the salon and rang the bell. "I want a postcard and an English Bible!

And at once: I'm in a hurry!" Then seeing the surprise in my face he broke into a grin: "Why Bible? you're thinking; wait and see! I'm going to play a trick on those fat old swine and I must be accurate in my quotation." When the man brought the postcard and the English Bible the Duke looked up what he wanted, wrote the postcard and addressed it, and handed it to me with the book. The postcard read "Amos v. 22. (signed) Alfred," and looking at the open Bible he had given me I read: "Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts." This card the Duke posted with his own hand as we made our way to the Faubourg St. Honoré. I never heard what the "fat beasts" thought or said.

I am afraid I must confess the Duke of Edinburgh was very venal, and by no means above taking a pecuniary reward for doing a favour. When the Prince of Wales founded the Marlborough, after resigning from White's, it is a well-known fact that the Duke took handsome presents from many men to have them elected: and I have already mentioned the Obedine episode. Though not mean, he hated being imposed on. I remember one morning going to see him with Tom Pratt, the very popular American doctor (son-in-law of the great Marion Simms) of whom the Duke (like his brother, the Prince of Wales) was very fond. We found him superintending the locking and strapping of

his trunks and boxes. Suddenly cord was needed; and the waiter said, "I will send at once for it, Monseigneur." "Not a bit of it!" exclaimed the Duke. Then turning to Pratt he said: "You wait here, Tom: we shan't be a second!" Then putting on his hat and catching me by the arm, he said: "Here, young'un; you come with me!" When we got into the street, he explained: "If they knew it was for me they'd charge a thousand times more for the rope than we can get it for! I know a place just round the corner! They don't know me by sight there!" So we went to a small emballeur's shop in the Rue St. Honoré and got the cord at the usual price and went back to the hotel, and he and Tom Pratt and I and the waiter all helped to cord the boxes.

The Duke of Edinburgh (of course, before he became Saxe-Coburg and Gotha) was very often over in Paris—quite as often or very nearly as often as the Prince of Wales, but, as his doings were not so advertised and limelighted as those of his eldest brother, and as he often never went near the Embassy the fact has not been generally known. He, like most people, loathed cant, but I heard him express this once in rather a funny way. The late Lord Campbell, a very sanctimonious man, by some means or other got the Duke to go to the English Church in the Rue d'Aguesseau—brought him there, in fact, himself. I was there that morning as usual and was greatly surprised to see the Duke and Lord Campbell arrive. After the service I

joined them: Lord Campbell left us; and the Duke and I walked back to the Bristol together. He was silent for some time: and then he broke out with the following astonishing exclamation: "Damn it all I don't mind the Deity: but I'm hanged if I can stand some of His followers!"

It is, I fear, a fact beyond dispute that his marriage was a very unhappy one, and that he ill-treated his consort. He adored his son, the poor lad who died. In some unreasonable way I believe he blamed his wife for the lad's death; but of this I can say nothing for certain, so had better say nothing at all. She had the quick, almost hysterical temper of the Romanoffs and had been spoilt by her adoring father. She always resented the idea of playing second fiddle at Court to her sister-in-law: —she, the only daughter of the splendid Alexander —the Autocrat of all the Russias, to have the daughter of poor Christian of Denmark, who only had eight horses in his stable for all purposes, take precedence of her! It was intolerable; but unfortunately had to be tolerated. She disliked the Danes intensely—"Ces sales Danois," she invariably called them. There could, of course, be no real reason for this antipathy, but then the Romanoffs have likes and dislikes that have no relation at all to reason. Here not only in the Court of Queen Victoria was a Dane her superior, but at the death of her father, another Danish lady would be her superior at home in Petrograd! As a matter of fact this spoilt, hysterical Romanoff princess

had, of course, never any reason to complain of the conduct of either of her sisters-in-law, who both (knowing her peculiar temperament) always treated her with the greatest and most unvarying consideration and kindness. But the fact remains that the Duchess of Edinburgh frankly detested both of them and made no kind of secret of her antipathy; a lamentable frankness that did not tend to create harmony.

Like most members of Royal Families, the Grand Duchess Marie had a most retentive memory for faces and names and a most insatiable curiosity. The late Lord Wantage told me a strange and striking instance of this. Wantage (then Loyd-Lindsay) had charge of the Royal procession from the station near Datchet to the Castle, when the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh arrived in England after their wedding in Russia and went down to Windsor for the bride to be presented to her august mother-in-law. There was an immense mob cheering as the wedding party, bowing right and left, drove through the gaily beflagged streets and under triumphal arches. Dean Wellesley had packed the Castle slopes with guests. As the carriage containing the bride and bridegroom reached the Castle slopes the Duchess suddenly turned, started, and then began to bow in a very personal manner to someone in the throng there, turning back indeed as the carriage passed on and repeatedly bowing. She was seen to speak to her husband; but he merely smiled and shook his head: he

evidently could not answer the question she was putting to him. Then Loyd-Lindsay, who was riding by the side, was asked, but he could not answer, but promised to find out directly they arrived at the Castle, which they were then within five minutes of doing. What the Duchess had asked was whether there was not a gentleman named Everett there, as she felt certain she had recognized him. Loyd-Lindsay found out the Duchess was right; there was a Mr. Everett there (as a matter of fact I believe he is there still)—a minor canon; and that very evening the Duchess sent for him, and had a long chat with him over old times. It appears that many years before (when the Grand Duchess was a mere child) Mr. Everett had been in Russia as tutor to one of the boys of the Imperial Family, and had been asked down to Tsarskoe Selo by the Emperor for a day or two with his pupil. One night the Czar, knowing the young Englishman to be a singing man asked him to give them a song—expecting, no doubt, some serious, sentimental ballad. But Everett sat down to the piano and accompanied himself as he gave them "Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green!" which so delighted Alexander II that he gave the young clergyman an emerald ring as a souvenir of the evening. The Grand Duchess had seen but little of the young Englishman, but she never forgot a face; and years later, in the densely crowded streets of Windsor as she, a bride, drove slowly through a cheering mob,

to pay her respects to her august mother-in-law, she recognized him, made inquiries, and sent for him.

But, as I have said, a retentive memory for faces and names is common enough in Royal Princes and Princesses, and, indeed, seems almost like a special endowment. Untold centuries ago—when Noah had just begun sending his pigeons out to inquire about Hurlingham; when Richmond (Star and Garter) was a fashionable place for dinners: I, with many others of both sexes, was driven down there by a very rich young American, who afterwards, for a time, drove the coach to Brighton. Of course, I don't mean Alfred Vanderbilt, but Louis Tiffany—no relation of the jeweller. Lord Carrington passed us on the road with the Prince of Wales and others on board, and that evening Tiffany's coachman told his master and myself that the Prince of Wales wanted to know the name of everyone on our coach—except mine, of course, which he knew well enough, and that of Tiffany himself. This struck me as rather odd, and almost improbable at the time, but I knew it to be true when, quite eight months later, and in Paris, the Prince referring to something (I don't remember what) said to me: "It was about the time I saw you on Louis Tiffany's coach with so and so, and so and so, and so and so. (He had the names all right, whereas I had almost forgotten them). "Don't you remember? I was with Charlie Carrington and we passed you on the road to Richmond." As a matter of fact, this extraordinary

curiosity of the Prince of Wales, this desire to know all about everyone, became, later on, and when his memory began to fail him, rather a nuisance and source of perplexity to those in attendance on him, and especially at the theatre, or during a walk at Carlsbad. He would say: "Who is that? I know his face but can't recall his name," and you would have to know all about the person inquired after and his name, or the Prince would not like it at all. This got at last to be so intolerable that I know one of his equerries who, before going to the theatre with the Prince, would "coach" for it, as it were—would find out from the manager the names of all the people who had engaged boxes and stalls for that particular evening, and ascertain all about them—so that when His Royal Highness would call him to the front of the box and say: "I say, who's that chap down there in the stalls with a big moustache and bald head? I fancy I know him, but his name escapes me"; or "Who is that lady over there with beautiful roses? I'm hanged if I remember her name, but I know her all right," the wily gentleman-in-waiting would evoke his Royal Master's high approval by his ready and comprehensive and informative replies.

Speaking of "can't recall your name," reminds me of the following story. The late Mr. Dawson Damer—"Hippy" Damer, afterwards Lord Portarlington—was one of the most deservedly popular men in London and a great favourite of Queen Victoria. The Prince of Wales gave a garden

party at Marlborough House to his mother, and to this gathering "Hippy" Damer came,—but came very much under the influence of "la dive bouteille." Spying the Queen he went up to her offered his hand cordially and said: "Gad! How glad I am to see you! How well you're looking! But, I say, do forgive me—your face is, of course, very familiar to me; but I can't for the life of me recall your name!" The Queen took in the situation at once, and as she cordially grasped the hand extended to her, said smiling: "Oh, never mind my name, Mr. Damer—I'm very glad to see you. Sit down and tell me all about yourself."

In many respects, the dear Prince of Wales—I must call him "dear," for no one could know him well without loving him—was very simple and guileless. I remember once I was dining at the Embassy with Lord Lyons to meet His Royal Highness and the late Dean Stanley; and when the Prince of Wales and I left together we walked, as it was a fine night and warm. "Very wonderful man that!" said the Prince. "Yes, Sir," I said, "wonderful in many ways." "What do you mean, in many ways?" "Why, don't you know, Sir, he's colour blind and has no sense of taste or smell!" The Prince stopped short, amazed. "Is that so? How extraordinary! But what a wonderful chap you are! Where the devil do you get all your information?" "Oh, I thought everyone knew that Sir, about Dean Stanley." Needless I hope to say that whenever I hurled my bomb of informa-

tion at my future Sovereign it was always charged with absolute accuracy and truth. On another occasion I told him, when we were breakfasting at Voisin's with Jim Bennett, that Edward I was so fond of *fromage de Brie* that he sent his tailor all the way from London to Paris—no mean journey in those days—on purpose to get some. This fact greatly interested the Prince and gave him a still higher opinion of my "information."

CHAPTER XV

Visit to me of murderer just after the crime. George Sheffield. Mme. Alphonse de Rothschild and poor child. Mme. Nathaniel de Rothschild and Mlle. Prevost. Baron Alphonse and Girardin. Renan. Emile de Girardin. Gambetta. His liking for me. Girardin and Dumas fils. You must ask for a thing if you want it.

ONE of my most curious experiences, and one, I think, which is somewhat unique, is that of a murderer calling on me directly after having committed the crime to ask me to give him some money. Many years ago, about 1880, a young jeweller (I won't mention his name for he is now one of the leading *bijoutiers* of Paris, with a large shop only a stone's throw from the Opera House, though not in the Rue de la Paix) started in a small way for himself in the Chaussée d'Antin, not far from the Church of the Trinity. Before that he had been associated with Guillaume and other well-known diamond merchants, and in that way I and a lot of my friends had got to know him. He would come round to us and show us anything he had that he thought was particularly worth our interests, never pressing for a sale: he would be very amusing; and listen to our views regarding any future orders of which we might be thinking—in fact, behave himself with tact, and in

this way we all became rather chummy with him, with the result that when he wanted to start for himself, the Duc de Montmorency ("Adalbert"); the Duke of Hamilton; Dupplin, Harry Milbank; Charley Rothschild (the poor lad who afterwards committed suicide); Camille Godelle, the Bonapartist Deputy; my kinsman, the Prince de la Moskowa; and many others did our best to help him. He started with only three assistants: a woman, an elderly man, and a mere youth. This youth—I might as well give his name for it is a well-known crime, *le crime* de Neuilly—Hodister (I think he was of Alsatian or German extraction) was a very romantic, innocent looking lad; like as it were a Shelley of the working-class, the very type of somewhat timid, but very sincere ingenuousness—the kind of boy who, to use a favourite expression of old Lady Molesworth, "wouldn't say boo to a goose." Nobody saw much of him for he was generally busy in the little shop and seemed more like a body servant to his master than an ordinary shop assistant, although often behind the counter and (as his master assured us) an excellent salesman. Coming home to Paris after Goodwood on one occasion I put up at the Hotel Continental—as my apartment was being cleaned. The jeweller to whom I have referred had gone for his vacation to his family at Montluçon, but during my stay at Brighton for the Sussex fortnight, I had been in correspondence with him about a bracelet I was ordering for a lady, and had told

him where I should be staying in Paris for a few days *en route* for Deauville. So on my arrival at the Continental, I found a letter from him telling me he would wait on me on my return from Calvados. That very night just at the close of the *table d'hôte* dinner (I had young Raymond Belmont of New York dining with me, I remember) a servant came and said that M—— (the name of the jeweller) wanted to see me and that it was very urgent. Rather annoyed, but still rather curious to know what could be the cause of this sudden return to Paris, and of this untimely visit, I left the table and went out and found young Hodister. He looked agitated, and when he began to stammer apologies, and explain that he had called on behalf of his master to ask if I could settle his little account, as they had a sudden call made on them and were in want of ready money, I saw at once something was wrong. "Why," I said, "this is odd. Your master is at Montluçon: I got a letter this afternoon from him, dated yesterday, and he says nothing about it!" The lad became still more agitated and said: "Oh, indeed, Monsieur—very well then; it makes no matter. I am sorry I have troubled Monsieur!" and with a few more words of apology he almost ran away. I could not make head or tail of the mystery; evidently something was wrong, but I could not imagine what it could be, for his master had always given the lad such an exceptionally good character. I wrote to Montluçon, and for the time being banished the matter from my mind. The fol-

lowing morning the Paris newspapers were full of an account of a mysterious crime at Neuilly: a middle-aged woman, reported to be a miser, had been found strangled and robbed; and the police were after two very young men who had been seen in her company and in her apartment that afternoon, but were now not to be found. I paid no attention to this, for of all crimes the least interesting to me is a murder; but after writing my letters—among others the one to Montluçon—I went about my business, which happened that morning to be my having Jim Bennett to breakfast with me at Voisin's. But the following morning I got a shock in the shape of a wire from the jeweller at Montluçon, worded somewhat as follows: "Your letter just received. Hodister is under arrest for the Neuilly murder." I remember that my anger was even greater than my astonishment, and I wrote at once a very strong letter of remonstrance to the man, pointing out to him he had no right to send such a wire, for it might have connected me in some way with his assistant, and result in a visit from someone connected with the Parquet. But I was not troubled. I went to the Cours d'Assises to hear the lad condemned; he was too young to guillotine, and so he and his young accomplice were both sentenced to transportation to New Caledonia for a very long term of years. All this would, perhaps, be of but little interest (although a visit from a murderer just after the crime can hardly be within the experience of every man) but that it has a very

curious psychical puzzle involved in it. The jeweller told me that just before leaving for his holidays that summer—about ten days before the murder—he had fainted in his kitchen and his head had fallen into a mass of glowing charcoal, and but for the presence and immediate help of Hodister (they were alone on the premises) he would, undoubtedly, have died. But the lad had rescued him, and revived him and then rushed out for a doctor. Now it so happened that just then—it had only been paid in that morning, and Hodister knew where it was and could easily have got at it—a very considerable sum of money in gold and notes was in the till—very many times more than the amount for which the unfortunate woman at Neuilly was murdered, a few days later. Why, as his master said to me, did this youth not leave his master's head on the burning charcoal, rifle the till and depart, if he were a murderer in his heart, as of course, his subsequent conduct proved him to be? That is an interesting question that it would take a really logical, clear-headed criminologist like Ambroise Tardieu to answer, and not the ordinary faddist who busies himself about such matters.

Among my many friends who on my recommendation were kind enough to help this young jeweller with their patronage when he started for himself was a man of whom I was very fond—George Sheffield, the private secretary and *fidus Achates* of that amiable old bachelor, Lord Lyons. I have never met a man more generously endowed with

that kind of sense called "common" (doubtless because it is so rare!) nor one whose advice was of such unvarying soundness. George Sheffield (familiarly called "the hare") must have, I think, prevented more men from getting into scrapes; or, when in, helped them to get out; and when out, helped them to put the broken fragments together and replace the pot thus mended on the fire of life to boil anew, than any other Englishman of his day. The Prince of Wales (himself a most kind, sympathetic, and wise counsellor) was not above taking Sheffield's advice, and (not only to my certain knowledge but in my actual presence) sought for it and obtained it in a matter of the highest importance and extreme delicacy. The only other person present on that occasion was the late Laurence Oliphant, on whose opinion also the Prince set (and properly) the very highest value. I may not even hint at the nature of the advice asked for, given, and acted on; except, indeed, that it was closely connected with the late Duke of Clarence. Oliphant was a great favourite at the Embassy and one of the most delightful dinners I have ever enjoyed was one where there was only present the Prince of Wales, Lord Lyons, George Sheffield, Laurence Oliphant and myself. I do not think I have ever heard the Prince talk so well—even brilliantly—before or since; and I shall never forget his burst of laughing assent—after a second of comically solemn reflection, "By Gad! now I think of it, you're right, Oliphant!"—when the erratic genius, Lau-

rence, enunciated a most curious theory (based, of course, on observation and experience) connecting a love for curios and antiquities with a form of erotic eccentricity and aberration not to be mentioned. Laurence Oliphant was a great man; and how he gave up everything for a lofty ideal (which failed him, though he was too noble-minded a stoic ever to complain) is one of the most sad and inexplicable social enigmas of nineteenth-century London life.

George Sheffield exercised far more power than was ever suspected; though everyone knew that ever since the old days in Washington during the American Secession War, Lord Lyons never acted without the advice of his faithful secretary. But the influence of Sheffield, while paramount with Lord Lyons, went very much farther—extended to Downing Street, Marlborough House, Sandringham and St. Swithin's Lane, on this island; to the Quai d'Orsay and Rue Lafitte in Paris, and to Berlin, Vienna and Petersburg. I was on terms of close and extreme intimacy with him, and I have seen in his hands communications made in writing that would have enabled anyone to make an enormous fortune on the Bourse or in Capel Court, but which he was far too honourable a man to use for any such purpose, although he was by no means rich. Alphonse de Rothschild, at that time the head of the great financial house in Paris, was one of his closest friends; and I have often, in the course of our usual morning walk, strolled down with him to the Baron's house in the Rue St. Florentin (the for-

mer residence of the great Talleyrand) and paid my respects to Madame la Baronne, while George and her husband were privately discussing some point connected at once with "la haute finance" and "la haute politique." Madame Alphonse de Rothschild was an English lady—sister of the late Lord Rothschild—and of her I must here narrate an incident but little known.

A very poor, but very able, cleaner of pictures (I had the story direct from him; and he did a lot of work for friends I sent to him and for me on the very rare occasion when I had anything for him to clean) in the neighbourhood of the Rue Gluck, had a son, an only child, a boy of about twelve, a very handsome little chap with beautiful eyes, who used to be always with his father, whether in the shop, or on his visits to his customers. Everyone knew and liked the child, and one day Madame Alphonse, remarking his absence, the heartbroken father told her with tears in his eyes that the boy had contracted some hip disease, and that he, the father, was saving all the money he could to have the boy operated on, not at a hospital—for it would break the boy's heart to leave his father—but in the dark little bedroom over the shop that they occupied together. Madame de Rothschild said at once: "*Mon pauvre ami!* My heart bleeds for you. But you must not worry for a moment. Leave it all to me. I'll see to everything." Now, of course, it is easy enough to sign a cheque; but Madame Alphonse de Rothschild did far more than

that: "elle a payé de sa personne," as they say in French. She came herself with Cuzco, one of the greatest French surgeons of the day (he happened to be living near the picture cleaner's shop) and not only, of course, defrayed all the expenses of the operation (and all the subsequent expenses connected with the convalescence), but insisted on sitting herself in the little dark *entresol* with the small sufferer's hand in hers to give him courage while the terrible operation was performed, "although," said the father to me, "the atmosphere of the room, the smell, was so sickening I had to go away to keep from fainting." Not, I fear, very many Christian ladies of the rank and wealth of Madame Alphonse de Rothschild could be found to do so tenderly, so quietly, so noiselessly, an act of such sweet sympathy, pity, and love as this Jewish lady performed so simply in the poor little bedroom of this suffering child.

But the Rothschilds are famous for just such acts, not only of generosity—for that in their case might be counted as being of no special merit—but of sympathy, self-sacrifice, and love. I could mention scores of them. Look, for instance, at the work that is being done by Lady Battersea; and here is another instance that is within my personal knowledge. When Prevost Paradol committed suicide in Washington while French Ambassador there, he left his only daughter absolutely destitute. Madame Nathaniel de Rothschild at once took charge of her, and had her brought up as

if she were her own daughter in her splendid palace in the Avenue Friedland, near the Duke of Brunswick's pink residence—close to the house where Balzac lived. But that was not all. When this young Christian girl grew up and developed a "vocation" for a religious, a cloistral, life, her Jewish protectress and friend provided her with the "dowry" required to become a bride of Christ —a nun.

Alphonse de Rothschild's antechamber in the Rue St. Florentin was a curious sight every morning. Every class and condition of human being was there—rich and poor. He received everybody. When, remarking this, one day, I told him Emile de Girardin had told me he always received everybody for fear lest he should miss a man with a new idea, the Baron laughed and said: "Well, that's exactly what old Girardin said to me thirty years ago—I thought the idea a good one and I've adopted it." When Ernest Renan once asked me in his apartment in the Rue St. Guillaume if there was anyone in the literary world I did not know, but wanted to know, and to whom he could give me a letter of introduction, I said: "Yes, Emile de Girardin!" Renan looked dismayed. "But he hates me!" he said. "Very possibly, although I don't believe it," I replied laughingly, "but that's all the more reason I want a letter from you. He'll be so astonished and pleased he'll make a fuss of me!" Renan was greatly amused at my view of the matter and gave me the letter at once. I was

right; Girardin was so pleased and so surprised to have anyone introduced to him by Renan that nothing was too good for me. He at once sent me an invitation for all his Sunday evening receptions for the coming month; and oddly enough, although the shortest month of the year that special February happened somehow or other to have five Sundays in it. Girardin was living at that time in his very beautiful house in the Rue de la Perouse. When I arrived on the first Sunday evening he greeted me very cordially but as guests were arriving rapidly and as he was alone to receive them he had to leave me almost at once. I began wandering through the very beautiful and rapidly filling salons, but not a face of a friend, nor even an acquaintance did I see. How very extraordinary! I who had lived in Paris all my life and thought I knew almost everybody (at least by sight) now found myself surrounded by wholly unfamiliar faces. I might almost as well have been at a reception in Tokyo. Suddenly de Girardin came up to me and said: "You don't seem to be amusing yourself. Don't you see any friends here? I thought you said you were an old Parisian." "So I am," I replied. "And I thought I knew quite half *Tout* Paris to speak to, and the other half by sight, but here I don't recognize anyone." Girardin laughed. "Oh, this is my political night," he said, "perhaps that accounts for it. You'll no doubt know more people at some of my other receptions: my diplomatic, my social, my literary, my artistic." That, of course,

explained it. I was here in the midst of a lot of political adventurers, half of them ambitious provincial Republicans of mushroom growth—men being pushed to the front as mere puppets by Girardin, Gambetta, and others—men of no real importance in themselves; men who, when they had done what they were told to do, were rewarded with a Prefecture, or Embassy, or consulate or something of that kind. "That's it, I suppose," I replied. "I don't know many of the newer and younger men of the political world." Just then I caught sight of Jules Ferry. "Oh, there's Jules Ferry, I know him." Girardin laughed. "Well, he's not very amusing. Do you know Gambetta?" "No." "Would you like to?" "Indeed, I should —it's one of my greatest ambitions." "Come on then," and Girardin, taking me by the arm, piloted me through the crowded rooms into a little inner salon where, seated on a sofa, under the famous picture of Rachel the great actress lying on her deathbed—the work, I think, of an Irish-French lady—sat the great Leon, the Dictator. There was a French Admiral in full uniform and covered with decorations sitting on the sofa talking to Gambetta; but Girardin interrupted their conversation and brought me forward and introduced me as a young Englishman, a friend of the Prince of Wales, who had been highly recommended to him by M. Ernest Renan and who was most anxious to make his acquaintance. Gambetta rose, greatly pleased (the Admiral rising with him), and then, with kind

and flattering words of welcome, extended both hands and very calmly placed me where the Admiral had been sitting, to the amazement and dismay of the latter, who, after a moment of sulky sheepishness, bowed low to the great Leon and retired, leaving me sole possessor of the Dictator's attention. And now ensued one of the most amusing conversations among the many amusing conversations I had with Gambetta. "And what can I have the pleasure of doing for you, my young friend?" he began very graciously. "For I hope I need hardly tell you how glad I shall be to put myself entirely at the disposal of anyone so highly spoken of by Renan, and introduced to me by our host." Now it so happened I was just then engaged in making notes for a monograph on Sir Robert Peel; I had been greatly helped by Lord Derby, but Kenneth Howard (and Lord Lyons) had told me that there was a lot of interesting matter at the Quai d'Orsay on the subject, which, if I could get hold of it, would greatly add to the interest of my study. I had never thought of asking for the aid of Gambetta in the matter when I told Girardin I should like to know him; but when he, with such truly Tartarinian expansiveness placed himself so entirely at my disposal I said: "Thank you very much indeed, M. Gambetta. I can never forget your great kindness, and especially as I feel so unworthy of it, notwithstanding all the flattering, but wholly undeserved, things Renan may have said about me. But as you are kind enough to offer me

your assistance, I will most gratefully accept it. I am making notes on the late Sir Robert Peel. I have the honour to know Lord Beaconsfield, and as, of course, you know his early career was closely connected with that of Sir Robert——" Gambetta bowed, but I'll bet a Rolls Royce to an orange he knew nothing about it—"now," I continued, "I am told there is much interesting matter on the subject at the Quai d'Orsay. Might I ask you to use your influence to obtain for me access to the Archives of the Affaires Etrangères? Lord Lyons, will, I know, gladly answer for my integrity and good faith." Poor Gambetta's face fell. "*Mon pauvre enfant,*" he exclaimed with that tender familiarity so common to natives of the exuberant Midi, "you've just happened to ask me for the most difficult thing in the world—access for a foreigner to the Archives of the Affaires Etrangères. They're still fettered with all the old traditions there; and it's like going back to the Middle Ages to approach them. Still, I'll see what I can do—you must come and see me." I saw at once the stupid mistake I had made in taking his offer of service seriously; but feeling sure he would take no more trouble in the matter (and needless to say I was right) I retreated from my mistake under a heavy fire of profuse thanks. But "sharp as a steel trap," as Abraham Lincoln used to say, Gambetta had no doubt felt that the mention of the English statesman's name called for some passing word from him, and he remarked reflectively, "Sir Robert Peel! Ah yes—I remember

well—but I never saw very much of him." I could hardly keep from smiling at the silly blunder from so clever a man. If he had only paused for a moment, he would have seen that mere dates made his remark ridiculous; for when Sir Robert died, he, Gambetta, had not even yet come to Paris—was still indeed a lad behind the counter at his father's little crockery shop in Cahors, selling teacups and basins. He recognized his *faux pas* the moment he had made it, and turned his one eye searchingly on me; but my face, I believe, did not betray anything, and so the great man drifted from this dangerous rock into the calmer waters of ordinary conversation. It was evident that the Admiral whom I had succeeded had been boring him to death, and that he was glad to have a new and reverent listener to his remarks. We (or I should rather say, he) talked on for a very long time. I saw people looking at us, and no doubt asking who in the world this young Englishman could be to whom the great man was devoting himself; but at length Juliette Lambert — Mme. Edmond Adam — approached and I rose, shook hands, bowed low and accepted with hearty thanks his kind invitation to come and see him whenever I liked. "What the devil have you had to say to Gambetta all this time?" exclaimed good-natured Campbell Clark of the *Daily Telegraph,* whom I had seen watching the Dictator and myself for the past half hour. "I've been waiting to speak to him, came here on purpose, and you've absolutely monopolized him." "Don't ask ques-

tions," I replied laughingly, "a grave *affaire d'état* we've been discussing—something that will cause an upheaval. It's not ripe for publication yet, but when it is, you shall have the *primeur,* I promise you. But what have you got that on for?" I continued, pointing to his Legion of Honour. "Oh, I've been dining with Prince Napoleon and came direct to see Gambetta, and you've been absorbing him with some silly twaddle, and now it's hopeless to try and have a word with him—that woman will never leave him." So poor old C. C. had to go back to the Place de l'Opéra that night with his thirst for Gambetta unassuaged. I saw a great deal of the Dictator (for he ruled France with an autocratic power) from that evening up to about a month before his very mysterious and untimely death; and on one occasion, when I met him in the Rue Royale and we walked up the Champs Elysées together, we had quite a crowd—and a rapidly increasing one—following us, and I said laughingly to him as we parted, "You'll probably see in the papers to-morrow that you've taken a young Englishman as private secretary." To which he graciously replied, "I should, indeed, be lucky to have such a secretary as you." Knowing his passion for cigars, I got a big case of the very best from London for him, and have carefully cherished his very kind letter of thanks. The artful way in which he used his head so that his blinded eye should not be observed was very curious. He always arranged that you should sit on the side of his sound

eye, and so moved his head that you might be for hours with him without detecting his infirmity. I have only seen another similar instance—that of the late Marquis de Tamisier, who had a disabled hand, and yet you might sit next him at table, as I have often done, and he so cleverly manipulated his food that no one, not cognisant of the fact beforehand, would ever have noticed that he was not as other people.

Girardin was a very active man: generally got up at 4.30 and never later than 5, no matter what hour he had gone to bed. He told me laughingly that he had always written two articles at least before the first knock came at his door. "And whose is that do you suppose?" he asked me smiling. "Some beggar for money, or some seeker after place," I replied. "No," he said, "the milkman. The others come later." One morning he was writing as usual (he was never long away from his desk) and Dumas fils came in—Girardin looked up and said: "Don't interrupt me for a moment, *mon cher* Alexandre, I'm making my will. Sit down." "Oh," said Dumas smiling, "if you're making your will, I'm glad I dropped in. While you're about it you might as well leave me that Meissonier you've got hanging over the fireplace!" Girardin held up a deprecating hand and went on writing, but in a few moments threw down his pen and said: "Well that's over, we can talk now." When after his death the great journalist's will came to be read, words to the following effect were

found in it. "Dumas fils has just come in. He says he wants me to leave him the picture by Meissonier hanging over the fireplace in the study where I am now writing. I hereby bequeath it to him." There's nothing after all like asking for a thing you want if you have the cheek to do so; you possibly may get it if you do; but you almost certainly won't if you do not.

One of Mme. de Girardin's plays is a classic: "La joie fait peur," and the great Regnier's acting in it at the Comedie Française was quite one of the most marvellous—if not quite *the* most marvellous —pieces of acting I have ever seen; and I have seen most men and women of note on the stage in Europe and America. Salvini in Othello is the only thing that came near it. But Emile de Girardin's plays were never of a high order of merit and never achieved any great measure of success, although the "Supplice d'une femme" had a long run, but then that (and this I know) had been not only revised, but partly rewritten, by Dumas fils; the end is entirely by Dumas fils, and Girardin was always dead against it. Dumas fils partly rewrote and turned into successes many plays brought to him—among very many others "Heloise Paranquet" by Durantin: and "Les Danicheffs." As a matter of fact, Dumas fils had the "sentiment du Theatre" in a far greater degree than Girardin, and I remember a very amusing conversation once between them at a breakfast at Mme. Aubernon's house in the Avenue de Messine. Girardin maintained that

there was nothing human that could not be put on the stage and no human complication that could not be got out of, if the play were written in a spirit true to human nature. "Of course," said Dumas, "If you kill your people you cut the knot; but if you don't make use of that silly trick there are lots of situations very possible in real life, but impossible on the stage because there's no way out!" "Give me one," said Girardin. "Well," said Dumas, "suppose a man, without knowing, of course, fell in love with his own daughter—what then?" It was a poser. Poor de Girardin had to throw up the sponge.

CHAPTER XVI

Lord Wentworth and his first wife. Divorce made impossible. Marquis de Caux and Adelina Patti. Late Lord Dupplin and his wife. Late Duke of Marlborough and Lady Blandford. The Fragonard. Blandford's second wife. Randolph Churchill. His rudeness. Cheam, Eton, Oxford. Mandell Creighton. Mrs. Morell. Lady Cork and Mrs. Bung. Marriage of Lord Randolph.

I HAVE in my life known three men who, though divorced from their wives, always loved them. They never, in fact, loved any other woman, no matter how wicked their conduct before, and how irregular their conduct after, the Decree Absolute. I am not referring to the late Lord Wentworth, although he is supposed to have forgiven his wife. But that was all nonsense and merely a trick played on him, as I will explain before going on to the three cases to which I have alluded. Wentworth's case was very like the *affaire Clemenceau* by Dumas fils. Wentworth was one of the most charming of men and a very particular friend of mine. He was, of course, the second son of Lord Lovelace and the great Byron's only child, Ada. His elder brother, Lord Ockham, had the most extraordinary ailment. He was too strong: if he did not constantly have the most violent exercises his muscles would knot. He worked, there-

fore, in a dockyard as a common labourer, and hardly ever came home; the last time I believe, only to be with his mother at her death—she died on her hands and knees, or rather, supported in that position, owing to the peculiar nature of her malady. Wentworth, at the death of his father, became Lord Lovelace; but before that he had established his right to the Barony of Wentworth. His first wife was a Miss Heriot, daughter of a clergyman, whom he met in Norway. Her face was so pure and perfect that a photograph of her as "Purity," or "Faith," I forget which (of course, with her knowledge and consent) was engraved and sold, and I believe is still sold, all over the country. Not long after his marriage, however, poor Wentworth discovered that she was the reverse of what her countenance indicated, and he had to take steps to obtain a divorce. During the legal proceedings he left her, of course; but being a very kind-hearted man, visited her from time to time as a friend and took a house for her at Brighton. One of the many co-respondents cited was Argaïz, the Spanish Ambassador; but he claimed diplomatic privileges (!)—just as very many years later another Spanish Ambassador here did in a very disgusting matter—and so had to be dropped out and his place on the legal documents taken by an attaché of the Austrian Embassy. Apropos of Argaïz, a most ridiculous story used to be told; of course, grotesquely untrue. It is said that Wentworth, making one of his friendly trips down to Brighton to see his

erring spouse, was on one occasion told by the servant that her ladyship was not well—in fact, was still in her room "with sciatica." "Sciatica! Oh, then I won't see her," Wentworth, according to this silly yarn, is reported to have said, "Tell her Ladyship I called." Then, as he turned away, murmured to himself: "Another of those damned Spaniards, I suppose!" Now Lady Wentworth had a very clever friend—one of the leading lights in the Divorce Court—and this man, hearing of Lord Wentworth's visits to his wife, and also knowing how naturally reluctant Lady Wentworth was to go through all the scandal and publicity of the legal proceedings, concocted with her Ladyship a very Machiavellian plot. Two days before the case was to be heard, Wentworth received at Horsley Towers a wire from his wife asking him to come and see her without fail. So down went the guileless grandson of Childe Harold to Brighton. Lady Wentworth, looking her loveliest, greeted him effusively and gave him a delightful *tête-à-tête* lunch. The wicked Regent of France, friend of the no less wicked Abbé Dubois, used to indicate opportune moments by bottles, and say, for instance, "There are three bottles of champagne between your last remark and this one"—meaning that the liquid had altered the atmosphere and circumstances; and made quite proper now what would have been impossible before; and it is not unlikely Lady Wentworth shared the creed of Philippe d'Orleans. Be this as it may, after lunch she very plainly

explained to her husband why she had wired to him so urgently. "You will be free in a few hours: you know my defence is only a farce. I shall be going away to France at once. Why not be friends just for the last time? I've acted like a fool, I know, but it's no use going over all that now. It's done; nothing can undo it; I've got to suffer for it. I've quite made up my mind to that. But that's no reason we shouldn't be friends just for the last time. You'll be rid of me in a few hours. Stay with me now and go back to London to-morrow morning!" She prevailed; he stayed, and in the morning she triumphantly reminded him he could not divorce her now, as he, by staying with her, had condoned her past conduct! This Circean enchantress did not live very long, however, and then Wentworth married a most charming lady—a Stuart-Wortley, who survived him. So the case of Byron's grandson was not one of the three to which I am referring.

Lord Dupplin—"Duppy"—is one. As I have already said, all his life he loved his wife, Lady Agnes, and her only, although he divorced her. He very often told me so himself. The next was the Marquis de Caux, the first husband of Adelina Patti. He never loved any other woman, although they were divorced, as he, also, told me himself. He was passionately in love with her, and no wonder, for she was—except for her ungovernable temper—a most charming woman in every way. He made great social sacrifices to marry her, but all

that he counted as nothing, for he loved her. So when they parted, and she married Nicolini, poor de Caux was broken-hearted. He eventually took as *chère amie* a lady who was almost the exact double of his lost Adelina. The third who "loved and lost," and still loved on to the end, was the late Duke of Marlborough, Blandford, the elder brother of Randolph Churchill, of whom I shall presently have something to say. I knew both the brothers intimately; possibly Randolph the better, but I certainly knew Blandford extremely well. I know he liked me, and he spoke much more openly and freely to me than he did to most people. He was a very clever man, had a million times more brains than his brother, and knew it, often referring to Randolph as "that b—— fool"; it was always quite enough; I knew, to whom he referred. And Randolph, too, knew the mental superiority of his brother, and hardly ever took a step of any real importance without first consulting him, although, I fear, not always following the advice given. The brothers were devoted to each other, that is Blandford always adopted a protective attitude towards Randolph, whom he always looked upon rather as an explosive shell to be handled with delicacy. Perhaps the best two qualities in the not altogether admirable character of that very ferociously moustachiod nobleman, so facetiously miscalled the "leader" of the Fourth Party, was his love for his mother and brother. Blandford and the present Lord Lansdowne both married, on the same day, two

beautiful sisters, daughters of a house famous for the good looks of its members, the Abercorn Hamiltons. One of these ladies, but I forget which (I believe it was Lady Lansdowne), was the original of Lady Corisande in Disraeli's *Lothair*. The marriage almost from the beginning was unhappy. Blandford used to be perpetually reciting his woes to me, but even in what he said I could always see that he and not his wife, was to blame, although his recital could not always be accepted as of Gospel-like veracity, as he had a strong Munchausen twist in him. Lady Blandford, accustomed to all the tender and kind refinement of her home, found herself suddenly mated to a man almost devoid of refinement, coarse and cynical in language and character; yet on the other hand, of a mental calibre far beyond the sphere of her appreciation. But how could it be otherwise—an Abercorn Hamilton married to a Churchill, and a Churchill with a strong dose of Vane Tempest blood in his veins at that? Blandford's treatment of his beautiful and refined wife was outrageous beyond all description. Things went from bad to worse, and at length the poor lady could stand it no longer, and she left him. But it is painful and futile to continue this unpleasant story, for everyone in society knew the facts. I got them, as I say, from Blandford, but my eyes even then were not unused to reading between the lines. Now notwithstanding all this, and notwithstanding his reckless life up to the time (and after) of his second marriage—and not-

withstanding his second marriage, the one and only woman whom the late Duke of Marlborough ever really loved—and he loved her till the morning when he was found dead in bed at Deepdene—was his first wife, the lady he had so outrageously treated. Not only did he himself tell me so repeatedly; but I know it from a leading luminary in the legal world, who was his adviser on all important occasions. I have referred to different scandalous "episodes." Blandford had a mad, crazy idea that by acting in the way he did he would induce his wife to come back to him—that there might be no more occasion for scandal! What a mad and ridiculous idea, but so it was. He cared not a fig for the other women (how he used to laugh with me about them); but he fondly imagined that by—as it were—playing these mad pranks before the house of his wife, he could induce her to open the door and take him in, if only to prevent further hullabaloo.

Blandford was born to be a company promoter, as I often told him, and he took it as a great compliment. His audacious self-assurance was up to the high-level mark of Mercadet. He was born a generation too soon. Were Blandford in his heyday now, he would, with men like Hooley, Bottomley, and Bevan, form, say, a Monkey Gland Thyroid Combine to bring us all to twenty again; and so would startle the world; and put a million at least into his own pocket. He rushed into my bedroom once in Paris (I was staying at the Westminster and he in the Rue de Rivoli at the Wagram), and said: "Get up, you lazy devil, and come round

the corner with me and see a Fragonard that I don't believe is a Fragonard at all, but that I've just sold to some damned funny Yankees I've met at my hotel!" Then while I was dressing to go with him, he said: "Did you read my article in the *Fortnightly?*" (or *Nineteenth Century,* I forget which now). "Yes," I replied. "And I was amazed. It's wonderfully clever, but what the deuce do you know about art?" "Nothing whatever, my boy, which is just why I can write such damned profound silly rubbish about it!" What a world of sagacity lives in that remark! Chamfort tells us that we can write or say anything we like about love with absolute impunity, for all that can possibly be said about it is both false and true. So with Art. Do not bother to go inside the palace; simply stroll about outside. Picture to yourself what it may possibly contain; express your conjectures as certainties in a very superior tone, and in language at once cryptic, mystifying, and flowery, and the trick is done.

Blandford's second wife was the daughter of Commodore Price of U.S.A. She was as penniless as Consuelo Yznaga when she married poor debilitated Mandeville (although this last named and very amusing lady inherited later on many "pieces" from her brother Ferdinand), but she cleverly contrived to capture John Hammersley's half-witted nephew, Gordon, and when I say "half-witted" I speak advisedly, for he was never allowed out without an attendant or keeper with him. John had plenty of brains, but once he made

himself look an ass by having his moustache dyed with something that turned it to a brilliant grass green, and necessitated, of course, the immediate removing of the hair on his upper lip. When Gordon Hammersley died he left his wife very well off; and then Blandford came along and married her, and made her the first of the three successive American Duchesses of Marlborough. A friend who happened to be in New York at the time of this engagement told me a very characteristic story of how Blandford and Mrs. Hammersley were smoking together at the theatre, and quite unmindful of the play, and with backs turned to the house, were laughing and talking in so loud a manner that at last an attendant had to come into their box and request them to "dry up or leave." When Blandford went to join Randolph across the Stygian stream (I wonder, by the way, how often the brothers insulted poor Charon during the transit!) his widow married the least lovable and amusing of the Beresford brothers, Lord William (of Calcutta Derby Lottery fame!), and their only child, a boy, died the other day.

Now of Blandford's brother, Randolph (whom I knew even better than I did the late Duke), more utter folly has probably been written than about any other person of recent years, except, perhaps, Sarah Bernhardt—*et encore!* From the point of view of ability, character, and brains, Randolph was quite of the ordinary class (vastly inferior to his brother, and without the genius, high courage

and splendid patriotism of his son Winston); but he had a simian aptitude for picking up and assimilating crumbs fallen from better furnished tables than his own. But that was, after all, nothing; or at best but a very small and insignificant part of his nature, and helped him little or nothing to obtain such transitory fame as ever was his. His notoriety was obtained almost entirely by one endowment and one only—insolence. I use this brutal word advisedly, for Randolphianism was not "bluff," which hints somewhat of subtlety; nor "audacity," for he was timid; nor "cheek," which suggests underlying humour; but sheer, unadulterated insolence—not airy impertinence, but the heavy, made-in-Germany, kind of thing; no rapier, but a bludgeon; quite lifeless, devoid of point and wit, and only capable of bruising, not of wounding or drawing blood. Now this quality, though not infrequently springing to an ephemeral life in certain natures under the generating influence of alcohol, and indulged in to ornament remarks to helpless dependents and inferiors, has hardly ever before been made use of to attain eminence, though frequently adopted by those who have already attained it, or been born in power. Louis XIV, as we all know, squirted wine from his mouth on to a lady's bosom; but then he was the *Grand Monarque;* the *Roi Soleil;* and was, of course, well aware that no boots could be found capable of reaching up to the centre of the solar system and administering the well-merited castigation. Now this kicking your way up

the ladder was not in Randolph a well-thought out and deeply-laid plan to conquer; as, for example, were Von Moltke's comprehensive cogitations that more than half a century ago led the Hunnish hordes from Berlin to Paris; nor even a discovery resulting from an accident like Newton and the apple. This gift of crude and unadulterated rudeness, this bludgeonistic endowment was Randolph's by right of birth; he inherited it just as Blandford inherited Blenheim; for just as great personal comeliness is the unfailing heritage of some of our noble families, say, *inter alia,* the Pembroke-Herberts, the Abercorn-Hamiltons, the Spencers, the Dawnays, the Huntly-Gordons; and the reverse of beauty, the birthright of, say (again *inter alia,* of course) the Russells, Cavendishes, and so forth; so a very decided brusquerie of manner is an inseparable accident of the ducal house of Churchill. Blandford of course, had this rudeness, but not without a certain polish of wit, which poor Randolph could never give to his boots save after a labourious study of Disraeli and "Little John"; and then the imitation was apparent; it was not the true Day and Martin. It made the early days of Randy unhappy. At Cheam his comrades did all they could do to eradicate this Churchillian heritage, but in vain. Like the white lock in the hair of the princely family of Massimo; the black mole on the cheek of the Choiseul-Praslins—it remained; and "Gooseberry-faced Churchill"—as he was called at Tabor's school, because of his sallow face and protruding

eyes—left for Eton without a spot on his character for hereditary rudeness. At Eton there were more efforts to help hm; but in vain; rough handling from school-fellows might, indeed, for a time, chasten and restrain, but could not really seriously impede the natural and hereditary instinct to be wholly regardless of the feelings of others, and to express that disregard with a crude frankness more customary in Shadwell than in Mayfair. But at Oxford all was changed. Cheam had been very unkind; Eton terribly unkind; but here on the banks of the Isis, almost under the shadow as it were of the Blenheim strawberry leaves, his birthright was allowed to spring up, flourish and expand unchallenged; nay, rather was it stimulated and encouraged by the obsequiousness fanned and nourished by the invigorating breezes blowing from Woodstock way—ever kindly unrestrained by a far-sighted tutor of his college, Mandell Creighton, the son of an upholsterer in Carlisle, who afterwards, by the help of the guileless and saintly Lightfoot of Durham, slipped from the offer of a Canonry at Windsor to the See of Peterborough, just left vacant by Magee, and then on to the See of London: in some ways a comically superficial man who gravely published in *Macmillan's Magazine* an article on Dante while yet struggling with the rudiments of Italian grammar under the care of Vital di Tivoli. I knew Randolph from his Eton days, and I can safely say he never had any ambition at school or at Oxford. All he wanted to do was to

eat and sleep, and he merely went in for the Law and Modern History school because it was notoriously the most easy examination to pass. He was wholly ignorant all his life of literature, either of his own or foreign countries (except novels), and of the classics; though the simian aptitude for rapid assimilation, of which I have already spoken, helped him to "cram up" any subject in a night that he might want to use on the morrow. His university career is accurately summed up (as his chum in his lodgings at Hippy's in St. Aldates, Archie Stuart-Wortley, laughingly pointed out to me once, years afterwards in Switzerland) by his own word "roystering," which he applied to soldiers in his maiden speech deprecating Oxford being made into a military centre. Woodstock was a pocket borough (poor Brodrick had not, of course, what is known as the "ghost of an earthly," and knew it, his candidature being merely a farcical *coup d'essai*); and so Randolph found himself one day in St. Stephen's. I was seeing him all the time, and I can answer for it that at that time there was no scintilla of ambition about him; merely the old desire—eat for hours, and, when done eating, sleep.

But now a strange thing happened. Of course, he was rude in the House of Commons, for poor Randy could not help his nature; but ere long he remarked that his careless family way of swinging the bludgeon about seemed absolutely to bruise, nay, almost wound, the man possessing the greatest intellect there—a man old enough to be his

grandfather (but that made it, of course, all the more amusing), no other than Gladstone himself. Randy could not believe it himself at first—in fact, half the time did not really know when he was rude—but two clever men, Drummond Wolff, the erst Jew, and John Gorst (the artful concoctor of the famous champagne estimates), saw it at once and resolved to make use of this new weapon for their own advantage. They neither of them would dare to say half that came to Randolph's lips naturally; so they played on his vanity; pointed out the obvious (though astonishing) fact that ordinary common rudeness could irritate and gall the great Liberal Statesman, and urged him (themselves staying in the background as little boys pushing another boy forward to do a dirty trick) to discharge broadside after broadside of the roughest Blenheim ammunition at the stately flagship, pointing out to him that he might in course of time cause a hole somewhere that would produce leakage; and at all events that by this perpetual bombardment with missiles that came so naturally to him, though no other member of the House would deign to use them, he would, if not make a name, at least individualize himself in the House, and possibly in the course of time get followers—create a party! Randolph, his vanity greatly pleased (as, of course, Wolff and Co. knew it would be), opened his mouth at once and began bellowing Blenheimisms at the bewildered W. E. G. There was, I need hardly say, nothing new in this game of perpetual abuse of an

adversary; Lord John Russell had used it effectively against Palmerston ("Johnny's at his dirty tricks again"), and there was the still more famous example of Disraeli's exquisitely sharpened arrows against the hide of Peel. But the way Randy talked to Gladstone was really no imitation of any way any man had ever spoken to another in our Senate Chamber. Still no ambition; not a flash of it; nothing but the ever-increasing desire to eat, drink, and sleep a great deal. But before proceeding further I must mention something that happened to Lord Randolph—marriage. And here I would call my readers' attention to the fact that I know what I am talking about, and that I knew the third son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough and the second daughter of Leonard Jerome very well indeed, very many years before they had either of them ever even heard of one another.

At the close of his Oxford career it became very evident to his family that Randolph must marry money. He could not expect much, for he had little to give in exchange; but he must marry money, for he had none; extravagant tastes, and unlimited loo and backing the wrong horses had made things very uncomfortable. Blandford specially requested me to ask Sam Lewis not to lend his brother a shilling, and I did so, although I never told Randolph or he would have slain me. His mother had saved, during the Vice-royalty of her husband in Ireland, all she possibly could for her special pet Randy; but that, of course, was not much and did not go

very far. They were all poor, desperately poor; Blandford before his marriage never had a ten-pound note to spare. The seventh Duke had been rather a wild young spark in his day (when I knew him age and lack of shekels had converted him, and books of sacred song, *Lyra Anglicana,* if I mistake not, among others, were dedicated to this impecunious ducal *lion empaillé*) and this paternal sowing of wild oats, though necessarily sparse, had greatly diminished the never overflowing family coffers: and Blenheim was getting very shabby and terribly out of repair. Now it so happened that just out of Oxford there lived, at Headington, an heiress, daughter of Morell the brewer, MORELL'S ENTIRE. Her mother had had social aspirations; had sought for and been honoured by the kind and condescending patronage of old Lady Cork. And of this, in parenthesis, the following amusing anecdote is told. Old Morell was a very simple, unassuming man who had no sympathy with his wife's social ambition, and particularly objected to having her great *pièce de résistance,* Lady Cork, perpetually being quoted to him as advising this, that, or the other. So one day when Mrs. Morell came to him and said: "My dear, we must positively change our butler and have a *major domo.* Lady Cork says it's absolutely necessary; everyone has a *major domo,* she says," the old brewer could stand it no longer and replied: "Now, my dear, I wish you would plainly understand once and for all, and always bear the fact well in mind, that your friend is *Lady* Cork,

whereas you, my dear, are only *Mrs.* Bung." But Bung or Cork, Randolph wanted the daughter's dowry, and so, with the characteristic crudeness of which I have spoken, he calmly sent his solicitor to propose to her! He was promptly refused (she married her cousin, a solicitor, still, I believe, practising in Oxford) and so, as there was no time to be lost, Randolph bolted off to the Isle of Wight and proposed to Miss Jennie Jerome and was accepted.

CHAPTER XVII

Leonard Jerome and Lord Blandford. Fry and the "Cornelia" cheque. Randolph and the doctor in Paris. His voracious appetite. "Dilke and water." The ridiculous "Fourth Party." Lord Glenesk. The triumph of Topsyturvydom. G. P. R. James and Lord Byron. Too late. "Fate and the dooming Gods are deaf to tears." Lord Randolph and the hairdresser. Lord Randolph and women.

LEONARD JEROME was entirely a self-made man, but unlike most members of the Autofacti Brigade, a very charming one and a good chap in every way. He began life as a teamster and was not ashamed of it. Old Sam Ward used to say he remembered Jerome well in his early days driving about in his red flannel shirt "swapping" horses. He one day found himself in Wall Street (the Wall Street of Henry Clews—a clever little Englishman—Foxhall Keen and others) and there began "swapping" shares, and soon became one of the most far-sighted, astute, and successful "swappers"; amassing a very considerable fortune in a very short time—for in those days large fortunes were made in Wall Street by almost penniless men in a few weeks and lost again in as many days. Now, being well aware of this see-sawy condition of affairs in the finances of Wall Street operators, and also being thoroughly alive to the fact that

there is nothing like putting disinterested affection on a sound and firm business basis to ensure for that somewhat fragile, not to say sickly, plant a long lease of life, Blandford, when his brother became engaged to Miss Jennie Jerome, went himself over to the Empire City to see how the land lay in the territory of Leonard Jerome and to endeavour to avert, for Randolph's sake, any possible seismic disturbances. It so happened that luck favoured him. Jerome had recently made a biggish *coup,* and being, of course, as well aware as Blandford could be of the ups and downs of persistent "bulling" and "bearing," had invested money in house property and land—bought, I think, if I remember rightly, the Union League Club in Fifth Avenue—formerly the residence of that strange personality, Mrs. Richard Haight.

Blandford duly pointed out to the ex-teamster (Blandford's own account of the whole transaction was excruciatingly funny) the overwhelming honour being conferred on him by this engagement of his daughter to the son of a *bona-fide* English Duke: not a silly Italian or French one, of which there were not a few knocking about in the marriage market for sale at a low figure. Jerome was not very much impressed; he was decidedly a "cute" man and not much of a snob; but he naturally wanted his daughter to be protected from the very serious scratches often inflicted by the ups and downs of shares; and so, after much talk and not a few cocktails, Blandford carried his point, and

got real estate settled on his future sister-in-law so that bulls and bears could not break in and steal; nor the moth of police interference—an insect not unknown in Wall Street—corrupt the sweet connubial harmony of Randy and Jennie. When Jerome's star had begun to rise he had settled his wife and three daughters—the fair-haired Clara (Mrs. Moreton Frewen); the gipsy-faced Jennie; and charming Leonie (Lady Leslie)—in Paris; but the Prussian advance had driven them first to Deauville, and then, the Siege of Paris having begun, to London, where I may recall incidentally, at Brown's Hotel in Dover Street, Clara nearly died of typhoid, and was only restored to consciousness and life by being drenched with the strong and (to her) unaccustomed stimulant of raw and undiluted brandy.

By the way, this enforced influx of pretty American girls from Paris resulted in another marriage, and this time a happy one: that between Bill Carington—the late Sir William, younger brother of Lord Lincolnshire, the handsome and delightful "Charlie" of fifty years ago—and the pretty and charming Juliet Warden, only sister of the fat and funny "Billy" Warden, whose mishap at a London hotel led to his retirement and death, notwithstanding all that kind-hearted Princess Christian did to try and save him. But for the War and Siege of Paris it is very unlikely that Randolph would ever have met Miss Jennie, or William Carington have met Miss Juliet (old Warden had made his fortune by being buyer in Europe for Stewart the million-

aire draper of New York, but was awfully ashamed of the fact as was Billy, who always used to say, "Don't for God's sake mix me up with Stewart's commercial traveller"), and in this last instance it would have been a misfortune to both; for this marriage at least was, as I have said, a happy one.

But to return to the romance of Randy and Jennie. His sister, the austere Lady Cornelia Guest, paid some of his most pressing debts, and, by the way, a rather funny thing happened in connection with this. Instead of getting his sister's cheques changed himself, Randolph just endorsed them and carelessly handed them over to Tom, Dick, or Harry who happened to be pressing him. One of these came into the hands of the genial Dicky Fry, the bookmaker to whom Randolph sent it; and he was going to make a great row about it, swearing that he was d——d if he would take the cheque of another d——d (let us say) unrepentant Magdalen! He thought it was the cheque of a woman named Cornelia Something or Other, then performing at the Alhambra, an enormous female; one of her admirers used to say he had to get on a step-ladder to kiss her! When Fry was convinced that the "Cornelia" on the cheque had no connection whatever with the six-foot-three piece of Alhambra impropriety, harmony was of course restored and Randy allowed once more to back losers on the nod.

Randy and Miss Jennie Jerome were married,

and perhaps the least said of the unhappy union the better.

The illness that first seized him during his Oxford days, began ere long to cause trouble, and although he was always willing, nay glad enough, to consult any specialist, he never would follow the treatment recommended. He would say "All right," and do nothing. He came with me in Paris, at my earnest entreaty, to see a famous physician; but when we got to the doctor's, he wanted to back out, and I had to take him to the Hotel Chatham bar and refresh him with a brandy cocktail before he would go any farther. Then, when we got to the great specialist's apartment, as the waiting rooms, dining room, salons, were all crowded as usual, I tipped the manservant to let me put Randolph by himself in the kitchen, and then, leaving him there for a moment, by a diplomatic and circuitous way I obtained immediate access to the great man and arranged with him that he should see my friend at once and before anyone else: in fact, the moment the patient then with him should have left. When I returned triumphant to the kitchen with this good news, I found that Randolph had bolted down the *escalier de service!* I rushed after him, dragged him back; the doctor saw him at once; prescribed for him and warned him. But all in vain. Randolph had the prescriptions made up all right, but calmly informed me two days later when I was lunching with him at Bignon's that he had "chucked the whole damned lot away!"

Talking of lunching with him in Paris reminds me of an incident that will illustrate what I have already said about his very abnormal capacity for absorbing food. I gave a breakfast to him and his great friend, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, at the Maison Dorée, for him to meet a very rich young American, Allan Thorndike Rice, who had just bought the *North American Review* and was roaming Europe in search of contributors well in the limelight. Rice (nephew of an old friend of my family, Comte de Sartiges) had been at Oxford, Christ Church, I believe, but I am not sure of the college, while Randolph was at Merton; but they had never met —were in entirely different sets. There were other people at that *déjeuner* whom I had asked to meet Randolph and the great Joseph; among others my kinsman, the Duc d'Elchingen (Ney)—who married a Heine and committed suicide not many years later. Rice captured Randolph as a contributor (whether he ever wrote for the *Review* I do not know) but the wily Joseph of Birmingham would give no definite promise. We happened that morning—it was in the *morte saison* and everyone was out of town—to be breakfasting at a table in a window opening on to the Boulevard—a table generally reserved for " la haute finance," the Rothschilds and others of that golden flour. We began at 12; at 1.45 my kinsman and I left the others, and went to the end of the earth—to the Rue de la Cerisaie to see the tutor of " Plon Plon's " two sons, Napoleon and Louis; were with him a long time;

then on our way back dropped in to the Gymnase to see a young actress who was rehearsing and in whom the Duke took a tender interest. We stayed there for ages, and then I suggested we should stroll down the boulevards instead of driving. All this took up a lot of time, and it was past four when we passed the Maison Dorée. And there in the window, where we had left him, sat Randy still eating—not drinking only, but eating. All my other guests had left him but he had with him a horrible American named Hurlbert whom he had seen (as he explained to me later) passing down the street and called him in. Hurlbert was only smoking and drinking; but Randolph was *eating*. He had begun at 12 and was still "at it" at 4.30. Poor Randy! His life was a very sad one; and he succeeded in making the lives of others very near to him terribly sad indeed. His political life was a failure, despite the fact that he held important office on two occasions. Everyone, of course, has always known that, who knows anything about it; and only silly newspaper people and (after his death) members of his own family have ever tried to build a pedestal for him. He resembled a statesman in about the same degree that Harry Lauder resembles Caruso; and indeed, he, himself, during the beginning of his Parliamentary life had no kind of political ambition. He was a barker by nature; Wolff and Gorst urged him from behind to yap at Gladstone, Sclater Booth, Stafford Northcote (dear Stafford Northcote, the most amiable of men and the most short-

sighted—like all his children—they could none of them see you till they had their noses on yours) and others. So he yapped and barked at those people at whom he was told to bark and yap, because it was as the breath of his very nostrils to yap and bark. And as the persons at whom Randy yapped were for the most part gentlemen, they were at first astonished, dumbfounded, and then almost frightened—very certainly bewildered—by the outrageous verbal attacks that savoured more of Poplar than of Parliament—Parly-arment, as Disraeli always pronounced the word. Disraeli was, of course, not deceived for a moment—"Dilke and water" was his famous definition of Randy; the great Marquis, Robert of Hatfield, always disliked him; and received with unfeigned relief, not to say delight, the resignation of the Chancellorship that Randolph (having "forgotten Goschen"—a ridiculous remark, by the way, which he never made) sent him. The silly "Fourth Party" was never for a moment taken seriously, and very soon the few men of any real refinement and importance—Arthur Balfour, Lord Percy, etc., who had been hovering in the neighbourhood, faded away. Randolph's earliest political supporters were very amusing; Gorst and Wolff were, as I say, the boys behind urging on the yapping—"At him! At him!" But Algernon Borthwick did really, I think, believe in Randolph from the very beginning; for please bear in mind, I am only now dealing with the first half, or rather three-quarters, of Randolph's political

life: not with the second, the sad, the almost tragic latter half.

Lord Glenesk was a man of quick and warm sympathies and of most generous impulses; and such natures are at times liable to leave unheeded —at least for the time being—the still small voice of their true and real appreciation of the character of persons they may happen to like. Now Randolph at first amused him (I have often thought, by the way, that Algernon Borthwick and myself were the only two persons Randolph never insulted, possibly, so far as I am concerned, my stature, and not total ignorance of the art of "fisting," had something to do with it); the journalist's instinct to be interested in the study of something somewhat novel was aroused; then by degrees, but still very surely he got to believe in him—which neither Gorst nor Drummond Wolff ever did. But although, of course, a keen and most shrewd man of the world, Borthwick was first and foremost, what is not always the same thing, although the words literally have the same meaning, an *homme du monde*: what for want of a better term one might call a society man—and therefore somewhat careless; so this careless *bonhomie,* coupled with his amused liking for the man, led him to take an indulgent view of Randolph's temperament and chances of success in life. Now this sympathy from so disinterested, experienced and shrewd a man, was what led Randolph to open his ears for the first time to the suggestions of his surrounding group of sycophants in whose judg-

ment, of course, it was highly creditable that a duke's son should do anything more unusual than stroll from a boudoir or the Divorce Court to the card table or paddock and back; possibly just dropping in at St. Stephen's *en passant* to perfume the Lobby with a vote; to encourage, as it were, poor Britannia who had been honoured by the charge of his family from, say, Flodden Field, or Bosworth, or as in this case, Blenheim: "It's all right, I'm here!" Anything more than that, on the part of a lad born under strawberry leaves, probably—nay, undoubtedly—indicated genius. Well, now that Borthwick seemed to believe in him, Randolph began to think that these silly asses might be right after all. They all believed in the power of insolence (of course, they had never heard of Gregory Nazianzen's quotation: "Συμτριβῇ προηχεῖται ὕβρις"—insolence is the forerunner of ruin, which, Pall Mallmerized, might be read as "cheek leads to check"), and Randolph knew it was his proud birthright to have tons of it always at his immediate disposal. In such circumstances were not all the prizes of public life at the disposal of a duke's son if he would only condescend to hold out his hand to take them? Well, possibly they were. Randolph's education was not of fine or vigorous fibre, but he remembered (and Borthwick helped with data) in very hazy and imperfect outline, some salient features of Lord Beaconsfield's career—of how this Jew solicitor's clerk had climbed the greasy pole; how he had found the Tories getting very moth-eaten, mildewed

and backnumbery, so decided he would "educate" them, as he called it—in other words inoculate the enfeebled frame with invigorating lymph taken from the Liberal, nay even from the Radical cow—what we should call to-day, monkey-gland the weak aristocratic arteries. Funny idea, but successful—something like a Roundhead persuading a Cavalier to vote for the King's death as evidence of his true loyalty, since by the murder of the prisoner in Whitehall, a King free and in safety would be created in France. The triumph of Topsyturvydom! But it had succeeded! it had paid! So he would try it, too; Dizzy had begun by cheeking Peel! he would go on cheeking Gladstone and Stafford Northcote and anybody, and all and sundry; no longer because Wolff and Gorst urged him to do so; nor, indeed, solely because rudeness was in his blood and bone; but because Dizzy seemed to have found abuse (Randy forgot the wit and subtlety sparkling in the abuse) somehow removed grease from the pole and so helped in the clamber. So now and in that way ambition, political ambition, first sprang up in Randolph Churchill's heart. Silly stories of youthful aspirations; ambitious dreams being encouraged and inspired by his wife—God help us, how comic!—and all the rest of it, are all pure and undiluted rubbish. His ambition to become a really serious politician, indeed, a Prime Minister, was born in Borthwick's house in Piccadilly—formerly Byron's house—the house where Byron left his wife for ever (I cannot say I won-

der); the house where Samuel Rogers brought the lad G. P. R. James—as I heard him tell my father in Paris—to see the great Childe Harold and found him writing and chewing tobacco (!) to keep (as he thought and explained to Rogers) his fat down; dressed in white duck trousers and a green baize jacket—"A damned ugly, fat, pasty-faced man—a great disappointment to me!" said James. *The Morning Post* had, of course, to be careful; but Borthwick in Piccadilly privacy, could be encouraging and even enthusiastic; and he was both. But alas, alas, it was too late! The first three-quarters of Randolph's career were over; the latter quarter, the tragic part, was now beginning. Ambition had been born too late. Instead of wasting his time in merely exercising his family birthright in useless and even harmful and silly ways, like for example (*inter multa alia*) forbidding the Prince of Wales to call on his wife—why had he not let all other considerations vanish (to use his own vernacular "go to h——") and putting on (what he thought to be) the Dizzy colours—Jacket, crimson insolence; Cap, black determination—jump on the trusty and tried two-year-old-mare, Audacity (by "Opportunity," out of "Damn the consequences") and galloped off to the winning post in Downing Street? But it was now too late. He ought never to have run down that kitchen staircase in Paris; never to have thrown his physic to the dogs; that was the awful secret of his wreck just when his ship was heading to port. Most of the

dogs ignored the physic thrown to them; but one, the one he feared, the Hound of Death, would heed no sop, but now came bounding on with jaws athirst for blood; worried him to South Africa, gnawing at him all the way; worried him back home again, gnawing at him all the way; growled so that the new-born voice of ambition was almost stifled; worried him out to Japan, gnawing at him all the way; tore one limb from him there; then worried him home again, gnawing at him all the way to Grosvenor Square; and then sprang on him in the first month of the new year and devoured him—destroyed him utterly.

"Fate and the dooming Gods are deaf to tears."

The circumstances connected with the last time I spoke to Randolph are very trivial, but so characteristic of the man that they are worth recording. It was in Jermyn Street; I had not seen him for some time (not having left Paris for months) and was shocked to see the change in his appearance and walk. But soon after our meeting, I saw in the funny story he told me (quite unprintable) that the old "chucker out" spirit was still very much alive. We were both going to Joseph Tatham's, the hairdresser, so we strolled along together and seated ourselves on adjoining chairs. Now from time immemorial Figaros have been loquacious, and if their remarks do not always have the sparkle of Rivarol, they, at least, are generally harmless. The unfortunate lad who carelessly swung the wrapper round Randy's neck evidently did not know the

great and historic privilege he was about to enjoy; did not recognize the Great Statesman, the Creator and Leader of the immortal Fourth Party, the manager of "Nitrate" North's Stud; the proud conqueror of Gladstone and Stafford Northcote; the annihilator of Sclater Booth, etc., and so, as if to an ordinary mortal, he threw out, as he lathered the Churchillian chin, some airy remark about the weather. Surely so small a spark (if, indeed, a tiny speck of spray from the shaving brush can be called a spark) never caused so considerable a conflagration! "What the h——did the man know about the weather, why the h——didn't he mind his own business and take care of what he was about with the b——brush, and leave the d——weather alone" and so forth and so on. The poor lad was frightened out of his wits; he had, of course, never been so spoken to before—and was quite unused to the banter of Blenheim, the caressing colloquialisms of Churchillian chat. Up to now his "I'm afraid we shall have some rain, Sir"; or perhaps more daring "Bad weather for the grouse, Sir," when not greeted by grunted assent, had at the worst been only chilled and checked by silence and a glaring eye. But here! The circumstances are, as I have said, very trivial, but painfully typical and characteristic, and this silly scene in London came to my mind in a pitiful way one day many months later, when I got a telegram in Paris telling me the end had come, and I knew that poor Randy would never be rude any more.

I have often been led to wonder what was the special spell of evil cast over the soul of Randolph by a malevolent fairy, and have come to think that it sprang from his low opinion of—nay, I may frankly say, his contempt for women—not, of course, the physical woman, but the spiritual, the true, woman; what, to parody Fichte, one might call the Divine Reality lying at the base of Womanhood. This pitiful failing he had to a supreme degree; and I have never known any man with this fatal kink in his nature ever capable of any noble impulse. Women-haters I have known and liked; they are generally swings of the pendulum—misogynists now because of excessive philogyny yesterday; and women fearers I have not only known but sympathized with, for there is often more danger for the soul of man lurking in a pretty woman's smile than in a famished tiger's claw—that is there was, in the old days of tenderness, diamonds, and point d'Alençon. But the man who despises the sex that cost Adam Paradise, but restored it to him in maternity, is a hopeless case—hopeless because of the pitiful darkness taken for light, "and if the light within thee be darkness how great is that darkness!"

"Tombe aux pieds de ce sexe à qui tu dois ta mère!"

To sum up, and to sum up with (what all who like myself knew him very well, will recognize to be) the utmost fairness: Randolph Churchill, considered from all and every point, can lay not the

slightest claim to be regarded as a remarkable man: not even to be classed as a man of second-rate ability —Blandford, for example, to use a vulgarism, had more brains in his little finger than Randolph in his whole body.

It is related of Lord Chelmsford that a man met him once not far from White's and exclaimed: "Mr. Jones, I believe"; to which the great Thesiger replied: "Well, the man who believes that can believe anything." All I can say is that anyone who believes in the ability of Randolph Churchill—even given good health—ever to have become a really serious statesman, belongs to the same class as the man so witheringly gibbeted in St. James's Street for his appalling error.

CHAPTER XVIII

King Edward's wonderful knowledge of American Aristocracy and Society. Some American social leaders. Travers again. "Damned little!" Old Mrs. Deacon in Boston. Charley Buller. Jim Mace. "Tubby" Butler and blushing schoolboy. Buller's careless treatment of King Edward's interests in Paris. Sandringham and Sir Frederick Johnstone. King Edward an excellent mimic.

A FACT but little known about the late King Edward is his remarkable knowledge of society in America. This very curious fact was first brought to my notice by Jim Bennett. I could hardly believe it at first, but took an early opportunity to corroborate this curious speciality in wide knowledge of the Prince, and found Gordon Bennett was quite right. It was really very interesting; he had no doubt acquired his information from his many American friends, for he himself never revisited the States after the Martha Haines Butt, Hinchingbroke Ball time; but I doubt if any member of the Union Club or Four-in-hand Club in the Empire City could have detected any mistake in the Prince's general knowledge of social matters in Gotham. He was a great lover of Americans, but some of their social peculiarities and prejudices both puzzled and amused him. He could not, for example, understand why the Vanderbilts

were not received in Society in New York until one of them married an English duke—(old Vanderbilt, by the way, started a ferry between New York and Staten Island, and so was called "the Commodore" in fun; and I remember the roar of laughter which greeted the statement made by Alfred Vanderbilt (slightly alcoholized) at a dinner given in Paris by Jim Bennett that the old man had been in the American navy—nor could he understand how good-natured, red-headed Arthur Leary (son of a hatter) should be a shining light in the most exclusive circles in which none of his brothers, George, Charley, or Dan, nor his sister were received at all. He knew that an American (Otis) was one of the founders of the second most exclusive Club in Paris—the Jockey (the Cercle de l'Union is the first); that two of the Empress's ladies-in-waiting, Mme. de Pierres, and Mme. de Varennes were Americans; that in the old days the salon of Mrs. Richard Haight in the Place Vendôme (directly opposite where the Ritz Hotel is now) was the rendezvous of all fashionable Paris; that the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Ridgeway (another American) in the Rue François I were as exclusive as any of the Faubourg St. Germain; or as those of Mrs. Jay of New York (John Jay was the first Minister sent by Washington to the Court of his former Sovereign, George III), or of any of the old Knickerbocker families, the Van Rensselaers, Van Burens, Suydams, Brevoorts (by the way, the new president's name, Coolidge, would seem to indicate

that he is related to the Brevoorts) in New York, or of old Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, of Mrs. Winthrop, of Mrs. Hunnewell in Boston, of Mrs. Willing in Philadelphia—and others too numerous to mention—the Prince knew all about them! It was really astonishing. He had, moreover, a lot of amusing American stories to tell, many of them rightly or wrongly fathered on Travers, the stuttering New York wit, to whom I have already referred. Here are a few which come to my mind as I write and which I heard the Prince narrate. A New York dandy, Lydig Suydam, met Travers and said: "I was taken for Louis Napoleon the other day. Don't you think I look a little like him?" Travers gravely examined his face and then stammered out, "Yes, damned little! But," he continued stuttering, "that's nothing to what happened to me yesterday: I was greatly flattered." "How's that?" asked the guileless Suydam. "Why," said Travers, "a man I hadn't seen for years came up to me at Delmonico's and exclaimed, 'Good God! who'd have thought of seeing you here!'" Another Travers yarn, but *not* told by the Prince, was the following: A certain duchess (she must be nameless, but the incident is well-known) fell flat on her back in a ballroom; off went her slipper (*not* of Cinderella proportions) and hit one of the beautiful Deacon girls in the face, causing a very ugly wound. Relating this to a lady whose husband made an enormous fortune in a patent cough mixture—she bought the superb and famous Mazarin rubies from Boucheron and

used to wear them at the *table d'hôte* at the Hotel Continental in Paris!—Travers said in jest: "Wouldn't you like to be kicked in the face by an English duchess, Mrs. ——?" The Mazarin-rubies woman clasped her hands quite seriously and looked up to the ceiling in ecstasy. "Oh, how lovely! I should indeed!"

Old Bostonians have told me that Mrs. Deacon (grandmother of the ladies, one of whom is the present Duchess of Marlborough) was very eccentric. She insisted on calling herself "de Konn"; used to scream at people in the street (like my mad old kinswoman, the Princesse de Wagram, mother of the equally mad Duchesse de Persigny) and one of her pastimes was to slide on the icy gutter in Summer Street, Boston, making her coachman stand at the end of the slide to catch her in his arms at her arrival! Her son (whom I knew very well) was certainly eccentric. He found young Abeille (the house of the Abeilles was one of the most charming in Paris, next to that of the Duc de la Trémoïlle in the Avenue Gabriel) in his wife's bedroom at Cannes and shot him. He was tried for murder; but it was proved he was not sane at the time; it was a "crime passionel"; there was no *guet-apens* (stratagem) so he escaped the final penalty of the law.

I have had occasion to refer to the indisputable fact that the friendship of King Edward, when the Prince of Wales, led not a few men into extrava-

gances and brought them to adopt views of life and acquire habits that were in every way gravely detrimental to their welfare. Among the minor and less important instances of this, poor Charley Buller must certainly be placed. His father had been Chief Justice in India somewhere, and Charley never had more than £800 a year at any time. It was therefore folly to let him, on leaving Harrow, join the Second Life Guards. But already at Harrow he had made himself well known in the world of cricket; was a racquet player of high repute; and had had one or two boxing bouts with some of the leading bruisers of the day. It was, I think, the Colonel of his regiment, Fred Marshall, who first presented Charley to the Prince, and young Buller's good looks, cheery ways, ready wit, and great prowess in the athletic world at once awakened the sympathy of His Royal Highness who was, in his early days, very fond of attending boxing bouts; and on one—more than one—occasion even went to a prize fight. In the cricket world Charley soon became—outside the professional, of course—quite "Eclipse and the rest nowhere"; and his fistic performances were almost equally wonderful. I went once with the Prince of Wales on a Sunday to Knightsbridge Barracks to see Charley put his back to the wall and take on both together (without gloves too, please notice) two clever boxers, stalwart young troopers in his regiment—and beat them hollow. His hand was small, and so his fist was not very formidable; but he was very clever, had a mar-

vellous quickness of eye, great judgment, could take punishment with Olympian serenity, had complete control of his temper, knew the science of boxing backwards; and could, with marvellous accuracy, judge the character, temperament, and ability of his opponent. So equipped, he was far more than a match for even the brawniest prize-fighter who, with rare exceptions, is rather more richly endowed with muscle than brains. Take Jem Mace, for example; I went with "Cocky" Cockburn to see Charley take on Mace at Angelo's in St. James's Street (H. R. H. presiding) and that mass of gipsy muscle, Jem, got very much the worst of it, greatly to the delight of the Prince who gave Charley a very handsome pair of sleeve links and invited him down to Sandringham on the strength of it. It was a typical case; Mace could never get at the nimble and artful Charley; once only did his enormous and terrible fist get home and then Charley said it was like a kick from a donkey and a second edition of it would have annihilated him. But the second never came; and meanwhile Buller's fist was never off Mace's body; and although each blow in itself was perhaps more or less insignificant to the sturdy gipsy, the perpetual reiteration of these taps eventually sapped Jem's equanimity provoking bad temper; and this, undermining judgment, led to his utter defeat. Think of a big swarthy gipsy brute (though Jem was a good old chap, and, in conjunction with many others, I did what I could to help him when he came

back ruined from Australia, where he had sunk his not inconsiderable fortune in the purchasing and running of a big drinking saloon) a man born in a ditch (a fact, he told me himself), a Prize Fighter, being beaten at his own professional game by a curly haired, blue eyed, laughing boy officer in the Household Cavalry! Prodigious and sublime! We all got terribly tipsy that night, and the late Lord Hubert Butler ("Tubby") kindly carried me back, *sauté au vin blanc,* in his arms like a child to my temporary cradle at Long's Hotel in Bond Street; and, indeed, I was but a chicken, still low down in a Fourth Form—my cheeks—yes cheeks will do —still tingling with the well merited (shall I say reproaches?) of my master for my eccentric gymnastics in Cornelius Nepos, or the De Bello Gallico—which last, by the way, Swinburne is reported to have, in waggish mood, construed at Eton as "concerning a Frenchman's stomach." There were not a few other memorable feats at Angelo's presided over by the Prince in which Buller was victorious—notably one to which I was guided by the late Lord Ormonde and Lord Downe ("Jane")—an encounter between Charley and Gouffé, the famous French Savate fighter, in which Buller very distinctly gave the fat Frenchman "Jack up the orchard" for foul kicking; again greatly to the delight of the Prince and once again a victory resulting in much cork drawing, and the carrying home of well alcoholized but still blushing schoolboys to bed. But this hobnobbing with men far richer than himself was the ruin of poor Buller; his brother officers

clubbed together three times to pay his debts, but he was incorrigible. A firm of hairdressers ran him into Holloway Prison; and he gave Cook the Clifford Street tailor a cheque that was dishonoured and with the proceeds of which he took Mabel Gray to the Derby. The tailor, naturally annoyed, communicated with the long-suffering Fred Marshall (Charley's Colonel), with the result that when Buller got back to barracks at Windsor he was placed under arrest and very severely admonished. But poor Charley had gone too far to reform, and to make matters worse he lost just at that time the little property (with the exception of his small income) that he possessed—some very valuable furniture, works of art, and presents from Indian Princes that had been left to him by his father Sir A. W. Buller, M.P. One night there was a fire at the Pantechnicon; the Prince of Wales the then Duke of Sutherland, and Charley Buller (all firemen) went to see it. The conflagration was terrible and but little was saved; but it was not till a few days later that Charley learnt from poor Lady Buller, his mother, that he had that night unconsciously been looking on at the destruction of all he had in the world, for his father's executors had stored everything at the Pantechnicon and omitted to insure the property now lost.

The Prince of Wales, with his usual magnanimity and that kind and generous consideration for all and every kind of mitigating circumstance that always distinguished his judgment of the foibles of his fellow mortals, forgave many delinquen-

cies on the part of Buller; and at last, to get him out of harm's way for a season, sent him to Paris at the time of the Exhibition of 1879 to take charge of, and look after, the beautiful presents he had received from the Native Princes, together with other interesting souvenirs of his visit to India, and which he had consented to have exhibited at the Trocadero. But Buller, though glad to accept the very liberal salary given to him, never paid the remotest attention to the Prince's exhibits, but was always hanging around me, much to my annoyance; or roaming about the town with Lady Falkiner and her brother, Sir William Call—people whom I very particularly disliked. In vain I warned him that he would get into very serious trouble if he did not attend to the very trivial duties he was being paid so very liberally to perform; and that, to my very certain knowledge the patience and good nature of the Prince were nearly exhausted. He laughed me to scorn, and said he didn't care a d—— what the Prince did or said—which, of course, was utter nonsense. The result, though disastrous to poor Charley, was rather comic. When the Prince arrived, he, accompanied by a few friends—the Duc de Castries, the Prince de Sagan, Lord Lyons, George Sheffield, Prince Trautmannsdorf, the late Duke of Beaufort, Charley Buller and myself—went, the day before the formal opening of the Exhibition, to have a general look round, and specially to see how his Indian things had been placed. We were all lined up in front of one of the largest sections from which the barred shutters were being

removed, and the astonishment, not to say consternation, of all may be imagined when a French workman, drunk and asleep, was discovered sprawling on the floor of the show case! He had evidently crept in there the last time it had been open and fallen asleep, escaped notice and been shuttered in. The Prince was very angry, and naturally so; would not speak to Buller who came forward to make some silly excuses; but, on his return to the Bristol, wrote to him and sent him by hand a most scathing letter; to which Buller—who in the meantime had been drinking very heavily to drown his apprehensions—had the madness to reply in a most insolent letter that he had posted before I saw him. Needless to say I should never have allowed him to cut his throat in that way. The Prince never spoke to him again—that is in the old friendly way, though in the pity of his kind heart he never quite cut him dead—but he asked me to tell Buller never to write to him again.

Speaking of Charley Buller and the Prince of Wales, Buller told me once on his return from Norfolk of a rather extraordinary incident that had taken place during his visit to Sandringham. I say "extraordinary" because it is somewhat odd that two successive Princes of Wales should have been insulted in the same way. One night the late Sir Frederick Johnstone—the sorry figure in that disgusting Mordaunt case; the owner of the fabled Derby winner "Sore Eyes"—those who remember and read between the lines *twigeront très facilement* to what I allude—appeared at the dinner table as

drunk as any lord or boiled owl could ever aspire to be. The "paralytic" condition of the sporting baronet was kindly ignored during dinner; but when the ladies had left, and the Prince with Buller and others were drawing together, His Royal Highness looked at Johnstone and said with an indulgent smile: "Freddy, Freddy, you're very drunk!" Johnstone tried to get up and failed, and then hiccuped out, mimicking the Prince's well-known trick of rolling his "r's"—"Tum-Tum, you're verry fat!" The Prince looked at him for a moment; then rose and left the room, touching Buller on the shoulder as he passed to indicate he wished Charley to follow him. When Buller came back he took Sir Frederick aside and told him he must leave the house first thing in the morning, which, of course, he did. By the bye, the old American resident in Paris, Mr. Corbin—"Howden Corbin"—who had known Brummell very well, told my father that although the great dandy admitted the "Who's your fat friend" story; and also that he had threatened to go down to Windsor to make the old people fashionable, absolutely denied the "ring the bell, Wales" fable. The late King Edward VII, when Heir Apparent, did not mind a certain amount of familiarity, would, indeed, even at times tolerate an amazing degree of it. But it was always necessary to wait and take your cue from him—any spontaneous outburst of impertinence he would check instantly—and I once saw him push Reuben Sassoon so violently away from him going down stairs when the impudent Semite play-

fully put his arm round his neck, that Sassoon fell and bruised himself badly. Another thing: although the Prince had a very keen sense of humour he hated having any of his friends made fun of; and, for example, was extremely displeased with a well-known lady because, when after some of her fantastic dancing, she playfully knelt before him and he smilingly said: "Thank you, Lady Salome. Have you come to claim half of my Kingdom?" she replied—"No, King Herod, but do give me Sir Ernest Cassel's head on a charger."

Speaking of mimicking, the Prince of Wales was himself—like George IV—a very good mimic. I remember one instance of it very specially. Once when in Scotland, a desire to see Paris suddenly seizing him, he threw down his gun and specialed all the way to the French capital, coming on us unexpectedly, for everyone thought he was in the North. He went at once to the Embassy. Poor Lord Lyons was alone with Sheffield having a cup of tea when the Groom of the Chamber threw open the door and announced—His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales! "Good God!" exclaimed his startled Excellency, jumping up and letting his cup fall on the floor. The following morning in his little entresol at the Bristol, before old Strahan, St. Sauveur, Marcus Beresford and myself, the Prince enacted the whole scene: going out and then coming in and announcing himself, and then sitting down and imitating Lord Lyons' "Good God!" and letting the cup drop. No professional actor could have done it better.

CHAPTER XIX

King Edward's classification of American ladies. Mrs. Carnegie. Mrs Ridgway in Paris: Mrs. G. Cavendish-Bentinck in London. Two extraordinary cases. The Jerome girls: Miss Stevens, Miss Warden. Fanny Carter. Dressing for nothing. Josephine Carter. Mrs. Ronalds and two villains. Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. Arthur Sullivan. "Count" Ward. The End.

IN speaking of the well-known aptitude to adapt themselves to the manners, habits, tricks and customs of any new *milieu* which so characterizes American women, the Prince of Wales was always fond of pointing out what is obvious, namely that only vulgar people—people who would be deemed vulgar in any of the best *salons* of New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, merely mentioning these as representative towns—need such transformation. As a matter of fact well-bred people, or perhaps it would be simpler to say people of good birth, are much the same all over the world, be they Polish, Prussian, Norwegians, English, Italian, French, American or what-not. They all have, of course, their national characteristics; but the fact that for generations their social pre-eminence has never been called in question gives to each and all of them the same special and peculiar stamp. It would never enter the head of, say, a Chereme-

tieff, or an Esterhazy, or a La Trémoïlle, to adopt any of the habits of living or thinking of any foreign people of the same social status as themselves with whom they might be forced to live—that is to adopt them with any view to improving themselves by so doing; although, of course, they might change their habits to harmonize with their new surroundings for a thousand and one other reasons. Good breeding is an absolute Freemasonry, and although an Obolensky may not hold the same theories of life as a Stanley, his outward bearing will be essentially the same and only differ in small and insignificant matters of detail. So, say a Jay, or a Winthrop, or a Willing, or a Crowninshield, or a Stuyvesant will be recognized at once as one of themselves, say by a Douglas-Hamilton, a Chimay, a Colonna, or a Furstemburg, and so on. They all belong to the same family with only mere insignificant surface differences; more often than not, differences in their favour, as for instance (to take one from many) in the matter of politeness, the Twentieth Century English are not supposed to be particularly distinguished for good manners. Speaking of Joseph Chamberlain's second wife (Miss Endicott of Massachusetts, now Mrs. Carnegie, and certainly one of the most charming ladies in English society) the Prince of Wales said to me very truly, very cleverly, and very gracefully—"She has come to teach our Duchesses manners." There is, as the Prince knew, and was never tired of saying, an aristocracy in America; and the members of it, coming

as *grandes dames* by birth and training, remain so in any aristocracy with which they may become connected by marriage or with which they may elect to associate, and do not change. There is, of course, nothing even remotely savouring of vulgarity in the piquancy of their Americanisms, for the simple reason that nothing tainted with the vaguest semblance of vulgarity could for one moment assimilate with their exquisite refinement. In the old days Mrs. Ridgway received in her salon in the Rue François I^IER^ all that was best in French society with the grace and charm of one belonging to the Faubourg St. Germain; as now—or rather until the death of her husband the other day—in London, in Richmond Terrace, does that most charming of American born hostesses, Mrs. George Cavendish-Bentinck.

So much for the thoroughbreds. But then come the half-breds, and then the rank outsiders; these last more often than not having far more money than any of the others. American girls belonging to these last two named classes must, of course, learn—if they do not wish to be despised and ridiculed—the ways and habits of their social superiors when they marry into an aristocracy, just as girls of a vulgar stock of any other nationality would have to do under like conditions. The American girls do it more quickly than others, that is the only difference; and this fact is all the more noticeable in this country because it so happens that the vulgar English girl is the most hopelessly hard to modify.

Here are two examples, both well-known in the *Grand Monde* of London. Here on the one hand is an English girl, daughter of a well-known millionaire manufacturer. When her father-in-law dies she will succeed to one of the most historic titles in our Peerage. She is one of the nicest, kindest and most unassuming of ladies, but she is hopelessly plebeian. Everything has been tried, but no cure is possible. You might as well try and transform a cart horse into a Derby winner. It simply cannot be done. Her voice, her gestures, and above all, her walk—elbows tucked way up under her arms as she resolutely and quickly waddles forward—bring tears of blood and smiles of vinegar. Then, on the other hand, here is an American: a girl of no family whatever, a girl who had no kind of social training, a girl who worked hard behind the counter of a dark, dirty little shop in the lowest part of one of the biggest of all America's big towns. She worked all day selling second-hand clothes to thieves, tramps, and sailors, and at night slept under the counter in the dirty little shop. Then a change came; I for obvious reasons do not care to say more—she suddenly became possessed of great wealth; and now still young, and beautiful and very charming, she is a leading member of our aristocracy and has trained herself so admirably that she entertains Crowned Heads, Princes and Princesses of the Blood, Ambassadors and *tutti quanti,* as if to the manner born—with perfect ease and unaffected grace and refinement. These two instances I have

cited are, I admit, extreme and abnormal cases; all common English girls are not so impervious to polish; and most of the half-bred American girls whose parents have ambitious desires for their daughters' social advancement whether at home or abroad are sent to fashionable schools in their native land; brought, if possible, to mix with girls their social superiors, and so have already acquired, when they marry into the aristocracy of their own or any European country, as it were a basis on which their clever heads can readily erect—even though jerry-built—the required superstructure. So the Jerome girls had not much to learn when the Franco-Prussian War drove them from Paris to London; nor Juliet Warden; nor, some years later, Minnie Stevens. Leonard Jerome was a most unaffected and unpretending man, a thoroughly good chap as I have said, and Mrs. Jerome was an agreeable lady. Old Warden and his wife were rather terrible; but the socially ambitious "Billy" taught his sister, so that when she married Willie Carington, she only had to curb her tendency to overdress to become as any English lady. Little Paran Stevens was the ordinary type of such persons in the States, and was always kept very much in the background; but the dauntless, handsome and ambitious Marietta Reed, who at one time was engaged in a boot factory in Lowell, Mass., and whom he married, very distinctly set out to conquer; and having, under the kind ægis of the hatter's son, good-natured, red-headed Arthur Leary (the most amiable of men),

obtained relative social recognition in New York, came to London, planted her standard in Albemarle Street, and with her beautiful, charming and refined daughter, Minnie, by her side, soon had all flock to her camp—from the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh, all through the peerage, down to whole oceans of impecunious patricians in search of regilding, in fact, of a general tinkering up, of their somewhat faded family escutcheons. It was like a foot-ball scrimmage on a Cup-day; but Miss Minnie escaped all mishaps and emerged happy and triumphant on the arm of the gallant gentleman to whom she gave her hand and heart and fortune; while her mother Marietta retired to New York, and Arthur Leary; and her Aunt Fanny (a very charming lady) settled down to enjoy herself in the American Colony in Paris. Another very delightful American personality in London society was the late Mrs. Ronalds. Fanny Carter was one of the prettiest girls in Boston, Mass., more than sixty years ago; and not only was she most remarkably pretty, but she had the most marvellous voice, a soprano that has rarely been surpassed on the operatic stage during the past half century, either in tone, quality or compass. But she was poor; she and her younger sister, Josephine, were both desperately poor; and yet, strange to say, Fanny was always well dressed. Malevolent old gossips in the very select *salon* of Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis used to say that the lovely and melodious Fanny was purely and simply clothed from head to foot

by the young men of Boston society who were all, needless to say, madly in love with her. It was said to be done in the following simple and guileless way. Fanny would go out for a walk in Beacon Street with some nice rich boy; she would go into a shop, order what she wanted and then—"Oh, how provoking! I've left my purse at home! Do pay for it, that's a dear boy. Popper will send you the money to-morrow." Popper, of course, always forgot to send, and so Miss Fanny's unkept promises, forgotten purses, and sweet smiles, kept her as well dressed as any maiden of the haughty house of Thayer, Hunnewell, or Ames. Old Peter Ronalds fell madly in love with her, and as he had pots of money, she married him and came to Paris with her sister, leaving her husband in New York to continue making money "down town" and send it to her—a habit of not a few pretty American ladies, and one which American husbands submit to with good grace. Everyone in Paris at first went mad about her: her beauty, her charm, her marvellous singing. The career of her younger sister, Josephine, was a short one. She went to a Fancy Dress Ball given at the French Admiralty (I am speaking now of the Second Empire days, of course) by the Ministre de la Marine, the Marquis de Chasseloup Laubat—who himself married an American lady—lying back with but little on but a tiger skin, in a hammock carried by Africans in native costume, caught cold, developed typhoid and died. Her death was a terrible blow to poor Fanny

who was devotedly attached to her; and whose very lovely head was being by degrees completely lost in the wild whirlpool of admiration which she found herself creating in the French capital. Very disquieting rumours at length reached the ears of old Peter in New York, and he began instituting divorce proceedings. There seemed to be no shadow of defence, and things looked very black indeed for Fanny, when she, suddenly remembering how her bewitching smiles had clothed her in the old days in Boston, decided that it might perhaps be worth trying to see what effect they might have on judges in Paris. She promptly, therefore, called on the one before whom her apparently hopeless case was about to be heard and was doubtless gratified to find that her charms had lost none of their power, for the case was decided in her favour. But soon Fanny fell into very bad hands. A villain carried her away with him to Tunis, thus shutting the gates of society against her. He treated her infamously; she escaped from him and returned to Paris. But there she fared still worse, for as all the ladies whom she formerly knew now refused to receive her, she drifted into a life of adventure, and was seized upon, blackmailed and exploited by two of the biggest scoundrels of those days, "Reggie" Russell and Baron Malortie, nephew of the great Bismarck. These villains practically sequestrated Mrs. Ronalds and kept her closely guarded in the neighbourhood of the Rond Point. I had always been one of her admirers, and when

I heard of this awful state of things from a friend, the old dandy Vicomte de Grente, I told George Sheffield, and he gave me a private letter to a very high-placed Government Official, with the result that Messrs. Russell and Malortie had to release their prey—at least appear to do so, although I know, as a matter of fact, the poor woman was forced to give them money for many months after. Still, she was now apparently free, and her friends (for she was really a most lovable woman quite apart from her great beauty and marvellous voice) rallied round her. I am happy to think that it was I who first presented her to the Duke of Edinburgh, and thus brought about the miracle of her social rehabilitation, for the Duke and Duchess had her down to stay with them at Eastwell; and with such a Royal whitewash spread over the crimson of her past, who was to be found to cast a stone? So Fanny Ronalds settled down in London and soon her little house near Sloane Street became a very amusing social centre—not very select perhaps, but yet not quite Bohemian. Her great friend in England was Arthur Sullivan; but she also had the merit of discovering that interesting personality—"Count" Ward, and during the famous Rio Tinto boom her drawing-room was like a miniature Stock Exchange. Peace be to her ashes! Possibly she had many faults; but very certainly she had very many and very rare and precious good qualities—not the least among them being that she never was known to speak one hard, harsh or unkind word,

even of her most bitter enemies and most merciless and relentless detractors. With her great beauty, charm of manner, and marvellous voice, had she been well brought up, and not left to lead a life of adventure from her very earliest girlhood, she would, no doubt, have been one of the greatest social leaders of her day, no matter in what capital she might have honoured with her presence.

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